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Kinetic Worship: A Place to Connect

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Kinetic Worship: A Place to Connect

Kinetic Worship at Andrews University functions as a space for collaboration, fellowship and storytelling. Hosted every Thursday evening at 8 p.m. by the University Towers (UT) residence hall, in conjunction with the Andrews University Graduate Student Association (AUGSA), the program features music, a speaker and food. Student dean JJ Martinez and AUGSA chaplain Stephen Farr lead the worship, aiming to make it an experience through which older students and graduate students can hear the Word of God, develop a relationship with Him and forge connections with each other.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, offers of food and fellowship at Kinetic Worship attracted over 100 people a week. The gatherings presented the dual

opportunity to get acquainted with others and experience God's presence. While the pandemic brought a multitude of changes to how the program operated, the leaders of Kinetic Worship worked hard to make sure it remained an authentic space for connection. Christina Hunter, director/dean of University Towers, explains, "We've had to amend things greatly due to COVID, but we've continued to push forward and provide worship, food and fellowship in safe ways."

In addition to following safety guidelines such as face coverings, physical distancing and occupancy limits for the in-person services, Kinetic Worship has been made available online. While integrating technology to livestream the program involved a heavy learning curve, the UT team worked hard to

ensure the program can now be accessed through both Zoom and Facebook for students who prefer to attend virtually.

This year, the worship service centers around the theme, "God, Make Me Brave." Students, faculty and staff are invited to share their stories with the group, allowing a safe space for expression. A variety of topics, from resiliency journeys to missions, are covered, each providing the opportunity for attendees to hear how God has moved in somebody's life. After each message, individuals gather safely for a time to discuss what they've heard.

Dehkontee Reeves, a regular participant, enjoys the service as a space to pause, take a break, and be with others. She enthuses, "I attend Kinetic Worship because I enjoy community and worship. I love that every Thursday I get to hear personal stories and testimonies from one of my peers and sometimes professors or special guests. I think it's very inspirational and empowering to see people go up there and be willing to share part of their story with us!"

As the program moves forward, the leaders of Kinetic Worship hope that students will continue to benefit from growing relationships with each other and with God. In reflecting upon the most rewarding part of being a student leader in the Kinetic Worship experience, JJ points to the moments following the service when he is able to watch people react to the message and fellowship with each other. He says, "I pray that our students see our worship service as a way to connect with a God that loves them so much and wants to have a relationship with them. I want them to know that God is on their side and will never leave them." ■

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