

Andrews University

## Digital Commons @ Andrews University

---

Lake Union Herald

Lake Union Herald

---

10-2021

### Yes, I Can-vass!

Ellie Butikofer

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/luh-pubs>

---

# Yes, I Can-vass!

By Ellie Butikofer

**“MOBILE 1, DO YOU COPY?”** This is Ellie, ready for pick-up!” I clutch my walkie-talkie in my one ungloved hand as I exit the driveway of the last house on the block, carrying a bag of books slightly lighter than it was an hour before. Soon Olivia Joyce (aka Mobile 1) appears in her car and I hop into the back seat, excited for my next “drop.” What was I doing, going house to house in Niles, Michigan’s snow-covered streets in mid-January? And why, despite having numb toes and freezing hands chapped to the point of bleeding, do I return two weeks later? The answer is simple. If I don’t go, who will?

As full-time Andrews University students during the 2021 spring semester, three friends and I pursued our goal of forming a club to unite people interested in literature evangelism work in the Berrien Springs, Michigan, area. The club is based on the University campus, with remote assistance from the Michigan Conference Youth Rush canvassing program.

What began as a handful of young people on a snowy January day has grown into a group of 12 participants canvassing every other Sunday in just the span of one semester. During each of our outings, the team spends most of the day together, meeting at 10 a.m. on a Sunday and not returning to campus until about 8 p.m. We begin the day with a worship message and prayer, followed by a short training to orientate new canvassers. Finally, at about 12:30 p.m., the team heads to the field to canvass nearby neighborhoods.

While canvassing, we carry a selection of Christian literature and videos: *The Great Controversy*, *Steps to Christ*, health books, Bible books for kids, etc. Each book or video is presented to the customer with a carefully crafted

memorized canvass describing the material’s content along with personal anecdotes.

While these young salespeople are allowed to keep a portion of the money they earn, participants are continually reminded that they are “evangelists first and salesmen second.” This attitude is evident as students return each evening excited to share stories of divine appointments, faith-building experiences and answered prayers. And what incredible stories they are!

On January 18, our first day canvassing, a woman stood on her porch in a t-shirt for 15 minutes in sub-freezing temperatures, holding our three-book devotional set as we attempted to complete the transaction. She explained that the recent passing of her mother had increased her interest in spiritual things. Holding up the books as she entered her house, she expressed that she was excited to read them all.

In a similarly inspiring story that occurred the last day of canvassing, a Methodist minister pressed a crisp \$100 bill into my hand. He excitedly chose eight books to add to his family’s library, including several spiritual books such as *The Great Controversy* and *Steps to Christ*.

These stories are just a few of many that demonstrate the incredible ways that God has used our canvassing club to help reach people hungry for spiritual truth. About 20

Bible study sign-ups and several hundred books accepted into the homes of local residents serve as a testament to the fact that the harvest surely is great. ■

---

*Originally from Alaska, Ellie Butikofer is a Speech-Language Pathology graduate student at Andrews University in Berrien Springs, Michigan. She also canvassed a full summer with Michigan’s Youth Rush program in 2019.*

---

*Ellie received a \$100 scholarship for this article. If you’re a youth or young adult interested in submitting an article for consideration, please contact: [herald@lakeunion.org](mailto:herald@lakeunion.org).*

Keyssa Miranda



► Ellie Butikofer