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### Andreasen Center for Wellness: Serving the Community Creatively

Rachel Keele

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# Andreasen Center for Wellness: Serving the Community Creatively

FOR MANY IN THE BERRIEN SPRINGS COMMUNITY, ANDREWS UNIVERSITY MIGHT AS WELL BE MILES AWAY. IT'S NEATLY TUCKED TO ONE SIDE OF TOWN, AND SOME RESIDENTS GO THEIR WHOLE LIVES WITHOUT EVER SETTING FOOT ON CAMPUS, BUT DOES THIS MATTER?

While most Adventist colleges and universities are named for their location, Andrews University proudly carries on the memory of J.N. Andrews, the denomination's first official missionary to serve outside North America. His legacy is honored each year when student missionaries from Andrews head far and wide to serve, and as future Andrews graduates prepare for their worldwide endeavors. But with this outward focus, it is sometimes easy to forget the needs of the local community. This is why the Andreasen Center for Wellness plays such a vital role in furthering Andrews' mission of sharing Jesus.

When it opened in fall 2019, the Andreasen Center became the premier fitness facility in the area. Members enjoy laps in the saltwater pool, relaxing in the steam bath, sunlit walks on the indoor track, developing community in a group fitness class, and so much more. Friendships are formed, discipline is developed and personal health is improved, in line with the Adventist health message. But that's not all.

The Andreasen Center provides a bridge to over 1,200 members who are not students or employees of Andrews University,

enabling the campus to serve the community creatively. In April alone, members had the opportunity to attend a free self-defense class, and new and soon-to-be moms enjoyed a special brunch while learning how to improve nutrition for themselves and their growing families.

In addition, the Andreasen Center helps reveal other unique campus features to the community. Recently, a long-time resident of Berrien Springs explained how the Andreasen Center let her discover the beauty of Andrews' grounds for the first time. "I love walking around Andrews now," she gushed. "I had no idea this was all here!" The center hosted a 5K fun run in conjunction with a local festival, replicating this resident's experience for many others.

While the Andreasen Center draws people in, its staff also loves going out to meet neighbors where they are. Andreasen Center team members give away free memberships at various community events and fundraisers, serve in the Chamber of Commerce and local Rotary Club, and try to provide meaningful services where needed. For example, the Senior Winter Walking Pass allows those 65 and up to use the



Peter Tumangday

▲ The Andreasen Center for Wellness

Andreasen Center's indoor track for free during the winter months.

Rachel Keele, director of University Wellness and manager of the Andreasen Center for Wellness, says, "Whenever someone asks me about my favorite part of the job, I tell them with confidence that it's serving my community. And when the stresses of work weigh me down, I think of Matthew 5:16, 'Let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in Heaven.'" ■

*Rachel Keele is director of University Wellness, manager of the Andreasen Center for Wellness.*

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