

## New annual giving coordinator

“Andrews is my home. I grew up exploring all the buildings. My mom would take me to class with her when I was 6 months old, when she taught nutrition. I still have people who took her class 20-something years ago coming up to me and saying, ‘I remember you.’” says Alisa Williams, annual giving coordinator for the Office of Development.

Alisa lived on campus until she was 12 when her parents, Alice, University archivist, and Gary, senior associate registrar, bought a home in Berrien Center. She attended Ruth Murdoch Elementary School and Andrews Academy and earned a Bachelor of Science in psychology from Andrews University in 2006. When she graduated she wasn’t sure whether or not to go on to graduate school so decided to work for a while.

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Her first job was with Library and Educational Services (L.E.S.) in Buchanan, Mich. There she was given the opportunity to work with their advertising and promotional materials, which she really enjoyed. When a writing job came open at an advertising agency in St. Joseph, Mich., Alisa took it. She worked for clients such as Boys & Girls Club, Whirlpool Corporation and Lowes. The Boys & Girls Club project became her passion because she knew it was making a difference.

When Alisa learned of the opening with Development, she thought it could be interesting. Even though she hadn’t done fund raising directly, she had worked on a fund raising project with Boys & Girls Club. To be able to help students afford to attend Andrews seemed like a great opportunity.

She says, “When I was here I had the Andrews Partnership Scholarship, I think they started it my freshman year so I had that the whole way through, and then I also received the DeHaan Work Scholarship and that made a big difference. My parents were also helping me and I was working three different jobs to keep from having any loans, but the scholarships really made a difference.

To be able to come back and help raise money for other students is great.”

Alisa is in charge of the Fund for Andrews, which supports student scholarships, academic research, and other things that benefit students directly. The annual phonathon is the biggest campaign initiative for the Fund for Andrews and it takes place every fall. This year 20 students were hired. They worked from the AIM (Adventist Information Ministry) Call Center, and had a list of approximately 40,000 alumni, attendees and donors to call.

They never got through the entire list of course, but they tried to reach as many as they could during the span of 10 weeks. The phonathan isn’t just about asking for money, it’s about staying connected with the

Andrews community.

The students let people know about all the great things happening on campus and talk about their personal experiences.

Students called Monday through Thursday from 6–10:30 p.m. so they put in a lot of hours per week. Shifts were staggered so not everyone worked four days a week, but one student worked every single night! These students were all actively involved at Andrews. Many of them had additional jobs, did sports, and all were doing well in their classes. They managed their time well.

Callers enjoyed asking what it was like for alumni while they were here, what they did after they graduated, and for career advice. “It’s a great opportunity for alumni to stay connected with Andrews and also for the student to get a bigger picture of what they can do when they graduate,” Alisa says. The group goes through an intensive week of training with a phonathan consultant as well as learning the call center phone system. Gathering current contact information for alumni and donors is also important.

Many people think that if they can’t give a big gift they might as well not give at all. “But,” Alisa says, “it’s amazing what all the little gifts can do. They add up and the last ‘ask’ students do is for \$18.74 in honor of the year the University was founded. Many



Alisa Williams

people laugh at first. One of the things I didn’t realize until I started this job, is that when corporations and foundations are making their funding decisions they look at the percentage of people giving. They don’t base it on dollar amounts, they base it on how many alumni are giving back. So even a gift of \$18.74 can make a huge difference.”

Shortly after Alisa started her job at the end of May, she sent out a summer appeal letter introducing herself. Since then she has worked with the Class of 1963 on their fundraiser for an endowed scholarship (see page 46).

Development recently started a Facebook page where they post about their current campaigns and how people can give, as well as mentioning interesting things happening on campus. Awareness of different ways alumni can help out is the main goal.

“It’s not necessarily all about the big, major gifts, the new buildings. It’s about helping these students every single day to be able to come here. That’s what’s so important to me and I think helping people to know that their donation, however big or small, makes a huge difference to students here. That’s how I view my mission. To help other students be able to come here and to have the same good experience I did is so important,” says Alisa.