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Making a Difference in Majuro

BY ASHLEIGH JARDINE

Ever since his first mission trip in 2008, Phil Giddings wanted to be a student missionary.



Phil Giddings (right) and his student, Kenny

"I really enjoyed the trip, and saw a lot of opportunities at Andrews [University] to be a student missionary," says Phil. "Everything I had as a reason not to go, God took away from me. Then the decision was easy."

The biology student at Andrews spent the 2011–2012 school year in Majuro of the Marshall Islands.

He taught eighth grade at an SDA school and formed friendships with the students and staff.

There was one person, in particular, with whom Phil felt compelled to share Jesus. It took Phil no time to realize that "Peter was a troublemaker," he laughs. The eighth-grader lied, cheated on assignments and got in trouble often. As the school year went on, however, Phil noticed a change in his behavior.

"The first thing we did every day in eighth grade was devotions and then Bible class," says Phil. "Throughout the year, Peter would really tune in during talks, stories and the Bible lessons I gave." Phil saw Peter's character change right before his eyes. The student showed a genuine interest in God and wanted to learn more about Him.

One day, Phil received enough money donations to buy a Bible for each student in his class. Peter was thrilled and began reading the Book in- and outside of school. Then, during a week of prayer, Peter decided to start Bible studies with Phil. He attended each session until his baptism at the end of the school year.

"I gave a little testimony for him, and he was baptized at the church," says Phil. "I was able to make a difference, and Peter's decision is the evidence of my work. I'm thankful for that opportunity, and I hope he is continuing along the right path."

Phil hopes to be a missionary again someday in the future. Until then, he is completing undergraduate studies at Andrews and spends his summers ministering to youth at Fun Learning About God (FLAG) Camp.

Ashleigh Jardine is a freelance writer from Berrien Springs, Michigan, where she is majoring in physical therapy at Andrews University.

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