

# Andrews Creates HS Summer Advancement Program

Offering Benton Harbor High School students the opportunity to take Algebra 1 classes

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This past summer, Andrews University created the High School Summer Advancement Program to offer selected 9th-grade students from Benton Harbor High School the opportunity to participate in a math recovery course conducted on the Andrews University campus.

The program, which ran from June 18 to August 15, covered two-semester of Algebra 1 in eight weeks. Each participant earned 0.5 transferable credits for every semester they completed. In fact, these credits counted towards their high school graduation.

In the end, 11 students registered for the program, seven of whom completed semester one and four who completed semester two. Not all of the original 11 students could finish both semesters due to summer work conflicts.

Each of these participants received scholarships which covered their registration, transportation to and from Andrews University, breakfast, lunch, tuition and tutoring. Classes were held Monday thru Friday, with the math sessions going from 9:15 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. In addition to attending class, students were also given campus tours and the opportunity to meet with professors in departments that interested them vocationally. Some of the departments the students interacted with included the Departments of Nursing, Aviation, Music and Teaching, Learning & Curriculum.

In order to better help the students, the Andrews University team of instructors worked daily on finding and implementing engaging methods to teach math which included art, drama and music. Led by Meylin Tremolis-Castillo, a recent BS in Education graduate, the instructors

were Lucinda Ford, a senior mathematics major, Anna Gayle, a communication major, and Aymeric Saint Louis-Gabriel, a seminarian with a BS in mathematics. Tara St. Jean, another seminarian, assisted with the meals.

“As I think back on this program, I remember seeing how God came through in so many difficult situations, and watching the kids grow,” Lucinda explains. “We became a family, a school family. It was great!”

This program was developed by Carlisle Sutton, director of Community Engagement Integration, in conjunction with Provost Christon Arthur, Alayne Thorpe, dean of School of Graduate Studies/Distance Education & International Partnerships, LaRonda Forsey, principal of Griggs International Academy, and Gabriela Melgar, student coordinator for GIA. Melissa Ponce-Rodas provided support in program evaluation and the Departments of Mathematics, Teaching Learning & Curriculum, and Graduate Psychology & Counseling also assisted.

While reflecting on the program and its impact, Sutton said, “I believe it is fair to say we have all been changed by the experience. We have seen God create this opportunity to demonstrate His love and support to those needing our help. The program was designed to aid students needing math recovery, but we were blessed to have been able to get to know them.”

In the end, each student who completed the program passed the course. The success of these students was the result of each instructor’s dedicated efforts to creatively implement teaching methods that would help the students grasp the material.

One of the students admitted how this program helped him see math in an entirely new way. “I saw math as something that I didn’t think I would ever use. I was making everything harder than it needed to be. But now, it’s easy and I know that I can do it. I would like to thank them for making it possible for me and all of my friends to better ourselves.”

The success students experienced relied not only on the teachers but also on the continued support of the Griggs administration with the curriculum, academic assessments and accreditation of the program. It also hinged on assistance from the Benton Harbor Area School administration. Ultimately, the program would not have been possible without the many generous gifts from local Adventist churches, Andrews alumni, faculty, staff, administration and friends and the Lake Union Conference. Sutton says, “We hope this program will become an annual event, where each year we can continue to expand the range of subjects offered. This will help us to better serve our community.”