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Greenville College Presents AgapeFest 2008

Greenville College announces the 31st annual AgapeFest featuring Relient K, David Crowder Band, Hawk Nelson and Barlow Girl. INO/Columbia Records' The Afters, featured on iTunes and Myspace, will be joined by new artists Nevertheless, Red, and Fireflight. Additional acts include 10th Avenue North and Run Kid Run. Gotee Records proudly presents Storyside:B, John Reuben and GC alum Stephanie Smith on Saturday evening's Gotee Main Stage. Greenville College will also feature student and alumni acts Photoside Café, The Silent Film and Dear Future.

AgapeFest 2008 Headliners

"Love Rocks" at AgapeFest 2008. Musical acts ranging from hip-hop and praise and worship to rock and contemporary all point to The Rock; the life and ministry of Jesus Christ. Relient K, successful Gotee/Capitol act that has appeared on "The Tonight Show with Jay Leno," "Jimmy Kimmel Live" and MTV, appeals to both Christian and unchurched youth with "its quirky sense of humor" and redemptive message. "We're all doomed to make mistakes and to try to recover," says Thiessen. "But I prefer to look at it from the positive, and refer to it as a grace kind of thing." RelientK.com continues, "self-loathing is pushed aside in favor of redemption and the promise offered by each new day."

AgapeFest 2006 fan favorite and sixsteps/Sparrow Records recording artist David Crowder*Band will bring a "remedy" for the Illinois winter blues with songs from their new album, including the project's first radio single, "Everything Glorious." DC*B brings sums up their message in the closing lines of *Remedy*, "Where there is pain, let us bring grace. Where there is suffering, bring serenity. For those afraid, let us be brave. Where there is misery, let us bring relief."

AgapeFest Ministry

Since 1977 the student-coordinated festival has featured top-selling songwriters and performers in the contemporary Christian music industry. The first student director, Chris Marsh, was pleased to host approximately 1,000 young people to the first Agape Music Festival (as it was previously known), but the true fruits of this labor were displayed when speaker Bob Laurent gave an invitation to accept Christ. "A high school-aged girl came running up to the front," Marsh said. "I can't recall how many came forward that night, I think it was something like 29, but that first girl gave me an immediate sense of satisfaction that God had used us."

The festival has grown in numerous ways in its thirty-one years. The one-day event became two and to main stage was added a popular second stage, featuring Battle of the Bands, local, new and alternative acts. The attendance has grown from 1,000 in 1977 to a festival high of 6,500 in 1990, and typically averages around 5000. A modest production originally held on the college soccer field, AgapeFest now makes it home at the Bond County Fairgrounds. A growing list of vendors serves the large festival crowd.

AgapeFest Welcomes Interl'inc and Area Youth

In the midst of growth and change, one thing remains the same – AgapeFest began, and continues to serve, as a ministry to area youth. For the last four years youth leaders have welcomed the opportunity to interact with representatives of Interl'inc. Created “to maximize music and media in youth ministry,” Interl'inc equips youth leaders with knowledge about Christian media, and how this media can better serve as a tool against the negative messages produced by some of today's mainstream media.

Ministry resonates throughout the two-day festival with Interl'inc “Talk Backs,” the words of speaker Brad Duncan, the redemptive lyrics shared on stage and a vital prayer ministry. Director of Agape Fest 2008 and senior Music Business major, Seth England, states, “We're coming at it from a lot of different angles, and a lot of different types of ministry; some they may realize and some they don't.”

AgapeFest's Unique Student Learning Experience

AgapeFest was created by Greenville College students and continues as a student-coordinated festival, with the guidance of a small cabinet of faculty and administrative staff. As they work through the challenges of producing a Christian music event of this size, GC students experience the music industry in the backyard of their college home. “You get to learn a lot from it,” England said. “You get to take something from ground zero to the finished product.”

A student volunteer cabinet is charged with oversight of numerous areas of responsibility, including artist relations, security, media/PR, volunteers and grounds. Under their supervision, additional student volunteers focus on and contribute to a specific facet of the festival, while learning the ins and outs of what it takes to plan, market, and ultimately implement the 31-year strong event. Although a great deal of learning takes place through the process, student staff maintain a level of professionalism that rivals that of other corporate-run festivals. Jef Cunningham, guitarist of AgapeFest 2007 act, Spoken, said, “Agape Festival last year was one of the best organized, most helpful festivals that Spoken played.”

AgapeFest Alumni

Former student directors and staff include an impressive roster of alumni who have gone on to work as artist managers, concert promoters and record label industry executives in Nashville, Chicago, New York and L.A. Chaz Corzine (1978) is a partner at Blanton Harrell Cooke & Corzine, an artist management company representing Amy Grant, Michael W. Smith, Point of Grace and Aaron Shust. Chris Oglesby (1983) spent almost

twenty years working in Nashville's country music publishing industry before starting Oglesby Writer Management in 2004. In his role with OWM/19 Entertainment Oglesby manages a large roster of country music writers and provides A&R representation for American Idol-winner Carrie Underwood.

Michael Scanland (1986) owns Concert Services, Inc. and Sonshine Concerts in Chicago, IL. His companies produce Sonshine Festival in MN, Ignite Chicago and numerous Christian concerts across northern IL, WI and MN. He continues to consult with AgapeFest on festival management, operations, booking and marketing. Michelle Fink Wright (1990) followed up her AgapeFest experience with lengthy tenures at Reunion Records and Blanton Harrell Management. Courtney Somerville Klimson (2003) directs marketing activities for Masque Sound's House of Worship division in New York.

Robyn Florian (executive staff, 1985-88) now serves as AgapeFest marketing advisor, one component of her role as director of College Relations and Marketing for Greenville College. Joel Goodman (2006) returned to Greenville College in 2007, accepting responsibilities that include operations advisor and webmaster for AgapeFest 2008.

AgapeFest's longevity is largely attributed to the loyalty of regional youth groups. AgapeFest is the only weekend festival of its kind in southern Illinois, which makes it a unique experience for the youth in the area. Each year AgapeFest attempts to identify the most popular Christian artists reaching the youth market for main stage and second stage lineups. This year's event, featuring youth favorites Relient K, David Crowder*Band, Barlow Girl and Hawk Nelson, is set to attract one of the largest crowds in the history of the festival.

All of the planning, preparation, prayer, and research leads to a powerful two-day experience known as Agape Fest. The music begins at 5 p.m. on Friday, May 2, and at 10 a.m. on Saturday, May 3. Advance ticket purchases can be made through iTickets (www.itickets.com or 800-965-9324). Gate ticket prices are slightly higher. For more information, visit www.agapefest.com or call (618)-664-1806.