

PRESS RELEASE

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Greenville College Presents AgapeFest 2009

Greenville College announces the 33rd annual AgapeFest featuring tobyMac, Skillet, Hawk Nelson, Disciple, and The Afters. Festival favorite and Mono Vs. Stereo artist House of Heroes will be joined by new artists Remedy Drive, Fireflight, and Wavorly. Additional acts include LeCrae, EleventySeven, and Everyday Sunday. Mark Roach opens the event with worship Friday night. Greenville College will also feature student and alumni acts Photoside Café and Fundamental Elements, along with regional favorite The Great Romance.

AgapeFest 2009 Headliners

“Love Rocks” at AgapeFest 2009! 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. Grammy award winning artist tobyMac returns to the festival this year after a scheduling conflict kept him from performing in 2008. At the 2009 Grammy Awards, tobyMac received his first Grammy as a solo artist for Best Rock or Rap Gospel Album for *Alive and Transported*, the CD+DVD combo released in the summer of 2008. Most recently, tobyMac headlined the 2008 Winter Wonder Slam tour, which featured label mates and past AgapeFest performers Relient K and Family Force 5.

Skillet brings the rock to the festival this year, closing out Friday night’s line-up with a bang (a show enhanced with a few pyrotechnics). True veterans to the industry going thirteen years strong, Skillet not only exists as one of the most prominent acts in the Christian industry, but has also gained accolades in the mainstream market, touring with such acts as Seether and Breaking Benjamin. In 2004, their single “Savior” reached #24 on Billboard’s U.S. mainstream rock chart, one of four singles to grace the charts.

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

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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-three 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 independent acts. The attendance has grown from 1,000 in 1977 to a festival high of 6,500 in 1990, and typically averages around 5,000. 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," national youth speaker Bob Lenz; new Stage 2 speaker Bob Woods, lead singer of Slingshot 57; Compassion International child sponsorship opportunities; encouraging music and stories shared from stage; and a vital prayer ministry. Director of Agapefest 2009, and a senior majoring in Marketing and Management, Alyssa Marshall says, "Ministry has always been our festival's heart. Every year we try to add something new or bring a renewed drive to a ministry we offer. This year we're having a speaker on our second stage. It's exciting to see how God blesses our ministry and provides us with options to help further His Kingdom!"

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. "It's exciting to put together something so big," Marshall says. "This is a huge project, and to have over 70 students put hardcore time into it along with all their other commitments is intense. But we love the opportunity and we learn so much!"

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 33-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 that 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) served as a partner at Blanton Harrell Cooke & Corzine, an artist management company representing Amy Grant, Michael W. Smith and Point of Grace and now manages Smith solely. 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 tobyMac, Skillet, Hawk Nelson, and The Afters, 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 AgapeFest. The music begins at 5 p.m. on Friday, May 1, and at 10 a.m. on Saturday, May 2. 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.