

Charis Grubbs: The talking and laughing you hear are the sounds of a Friday night at the local Christian Center, a men's homeless shelter located in downtown Anderson. After dinner is served, some of the men join nine or 10 Anderson University students in playing games and just spending time together.

The AU students come to serve the Christian Center for a couple of hours each week. One of the most prominent voices in the dining hall is that of Dave Nolan, a man born and raised in Pendleton, Indiana. What many don't know is that he was a DJ for rock and roll stations for 30 years before coming to the Christian Center. Dave says he was interested in radio since he was 10 years old. It wasn't long after that that he landed his first job as a radio personality.

Dave Nolan: I actually started when I was in high school, the high school I went to, Pendleton Heights, had a radio station called WEEM. I had been on the air for five weeks, thought I was really good and called a radio station in Anderson and asked for a job.

The gentleman who interviewed me asked if I could come in at 1:30 and I said, "No, I can't, I'll be in English class." He goes, "Oh, you go to Ball State?" I said, "No, I go to Pendleton Heights." He goes, "How old are you?" I said, "15." "Can you come in at 4:30?" And they hired me. So I was 15 when I started drawing my first paycheck.

Charis: Throughout his 30 years in radio there's one memory that Dave treasures most, meeting one of the members of his favorite band, The Beatles.

Dave: I met George Harrison, who was in The Beatles, he was their guitar player. He was in a group called The Traveling Wilburys. This was when I was in Tulsa. And I walked up to him, behind stage, I got to emcee all the concerts. Well, I walked up to him and I said, "George, I know your busy, I'm busy too, my name's Dave Nolan, I'm going to be emceeing the show tonight." He looks at me and he says, "Oh, I've been listening to you, you're funny." Well, it stunned me because I'm a huge Beatles fan, and I said, "Well, I think I've heard you on the radio a time or two." And he goes, "I suppose you have." So that was kind of a funny moment, you know, getting to meet one of my icons and he was like kidding around with me, you know?

Charis: One of the things that Dave loved most about radio was community involvement. He enjoyed playing music and talking on the air, but he also found ways to do good in the places that he lived.

Dave: When I worked in Lafayette, there was a story in the Lafayette Journal and Courier that the food bank was about empty and it was before Thanksgiving. I went on the air and told people I was mad at them, and I was mad at myself, because we weren't donating food. As it turns out, trying to make a long story short, we had to get two semis to haul the food away from the radio station. I just said, you know, "Bring food here." And they did and it got out of control in a hurry. But it helped, you know? And that made me feel good.

Charis: Dave has been a resident of the Christian Center since experiencing a personal crisis. Although he no longer works in radio full time, he has done a little on air work for area stations, including WQME. In terms of his future in radio, Dave was excited when the Christian center staff recently gave him an idea that he can't wait to put into action.

Dave: The people that run this place are actually helping me put together a radio show to deal with issues concerning not only, for the lack of better term, homeless people, but things like drug issues and positive things that are going on in the area as well.

Charis: So the next time you turn on the radio, you might want to listen closely. You may be hearing the voice of Dave Nolan, radio personality from Pendleton, Indiana. This is Charis Grubbs reporting for the Andersonian.