

*At first, coming to the Ephphatha Center is quite confusing.*

### Opening doors of understanding

Evaluation day at the Ephphatha Center, Detroit, MI, is approached as an opportunity to help clarify any problems an individual child may be experiencing.

The parents and child are made aware of the child's strengths and of how these strengths can be used to help the child's weaknesses.

At a later meeting, teaching strategies and coping mechanisms that seem most appropriate to help the child are shared with his or her teachers and principal.

Each of us serves God with the talents we have been given.



*Interview: Evaluation procedures are explained and concerns are discussed.*

## Ephphatha Center

The Ephphatha Center, a division of Lutheran Special Education Ministries, Detroit, MI, is dedicated to opening opportunities of knowledge, understanding, success, fellowship, education and Christianity for all with the love of Christ being central.

The center's name—Ephphatha—is taken from Mark 7:31-37. The Bible story tells of Jesus restoring hearing and speech to a man who was both deaf and mute. After the man in the story is fully prepared, Jesus said the word, "Ephphatha." The man's ears were opened and his tongue was loosened so that he was able to speak.

Children who experience learning difficulties in regular education classrooms are often referred to Ephphatha Center. Parents and teachers seek answers to questions such as, "Why isn't my child learning to read as quickly as others?" or "Why can't John remember and follow directions?"

*Ephphatha Center's statement of purpose: to promote the Christian education of children with special learning needs by offering professional evaluation and guidance, thereby fostering the recognition of strengths and the acceptance of weaknesses, enabling children to develop their God-given gifts according to His plan.*



*The photographs on this page were taken at Ephphatha Center on the campus of Lutheran Special Education Ministries in Detroit, MI. Pictured are Ephphatha Center staff members, Mrs. Patricia Baxter, and son Stephen.*



*Testing: Testing helps us recognize this child's skills and compare them to God-given abilities.*



*Possible ways to help are discussed with the parent.*



## Opening pathways of empathy

What is it like to have a learning disability? Statistics show that 7 percent of our population has a learning disability of some sort. What about the remaining 93 percent?

Some are parents of a child with a learning disability and are aware of the frustrations. Some are teachers specially trained to work with students who have learning disabilities and are knowledgeable through education. However, there are many uninformed people.

Ephphatha Center opens pathways of understanding by offering workshops to teachers, parents, civic and congregational groups. In the workshops, explanations and descriptions of learning disabilities are discussed, as well as methods and materials appropriate for the religious education of children with special needs.

However, the heart of each workshop is a group participation segment. The participants have an opportunity to personally discover and understand what it feels like to have a learning disability.

Minimal costs to your group include transportation, duplication of materials and donation to the ministry.

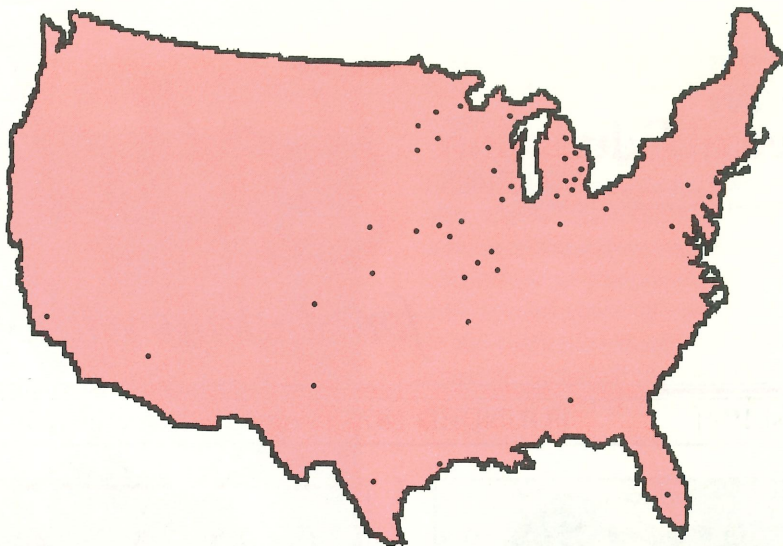
Open your pathway of understanding—request a workshop for your group. Contact Instructional Consultant Kathy Krause, (313) 368-1220, for more information.

## Opening gates of fellowship

Lutheran Special Education Ministries is located on a beautiful 20-acre wooded site on the east side of Detroit.

In addition to North Detroit Lutheran School, the 20 acres contains picnic grounds with baseball and soccer fields, a children's playground, conference meeting rooms, food service, a chapel that seats 150 people, a retreat center with sleeping capacity for 60 lodgers, and a large gym with pull-out stage and room dividers.

The site provides a great opportunity to share the love of Jesus in a unique setting! If your group would like to use these facilities, call (313) 368-1220 and ask for Barbara Weichel, Ephphatha secretary.



*Ephphatha Center crosses the highways of our nation to provide services to families and congregations in many states.*

## Opening avenues to meet needs throughout the United States

Ephphatha Center opens avenues throughout the United States by meeting the needs of children with special learning needs and helping them learn to know their Savior.

About 400 students receive direct services through Lutheran Special Edu-

cation Ministries via special education classrooms in Michigan and Illinois, but many more children throughout the United States are also served.

Most of these children have their educational special needs met through their community's public school, but they attend a Lutheran church for religious education.

Pastors, Sunday School teachers or parents may contact Curriculum Consultant Shirley Danz of Lutheran Special Education Ministries (Ephphatha Center) about appropriate religious methods and materials for Sunday School, Confirmation and Bible class.

Recently, Ephphatha Center received a request from a family in Hobbs, NM, long-time friends and supporters of the ministry. Their 8-year-old son had been diagnosed as experiencing a severe sensory processing problem, an inability to understand material taught in a typical manner. The public school placed this boy in a classroom with mentally impaired children, believing it to be most appropriate.

When the family contacted Mrs. Danz, she willingly sent appropriate religious materials to the family for the child's Sunday School teachers to use.

Not only was there material support, but there was also spiritual support. The family was placed on a prayer list and continuing encouragement was expressed to the parents as they advocated for appropriate educational opportunities.

During the past year, Mrs. Danz has been in contact with people in many states, such as: Arizona, Wisconsin, Florida, Texas, Minnesota, Iowa and Colorado.

### *What's it like to have a reading disability?*

How well can you read this paragraph? (Look elsewhere in this issue for the translation.)

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## Opening portals of consultation

Lutheran Special Education Ministries maintains an Ephphatha Center in Illinois as well as in Michigan. Through these two centers, Christian education has expanded opportunities to children with special learning needs. Evaluation processes are used to discover the type of learning that will unlock a child's God-given potential.

Another portal is open—one that is wide enough to accommodate many Lutheran schools in Illinois and Michigan. This door represents the area of consultation. We have trained staff ready to help parents, teachers and pastors who have questions about children with special needs.

Educational consultants for Lutheran Special Education Ministries have been given the opportunity to use the training and talents acquired, with the help of God, to assist His special children. We can reach many more students than a resource teacher, or for that matter, a regular education teacher. We have the ability to reach outside the classroom and touch the lives of students where services are not available.

When we talk to one parent, we touch the lives of that family. When we talk to one teacher, we may touch the lives of up to 30 children. When we speak to parent groups, teacher groups or at conferences, the lives we touch are multiplied countless times.

The message we bring to all these people is a message of hope that these special children will learn that they are loved by God. When they know and accept this love, they will be able to cope with what the world throws at them—despite their specific handicap.

### **Ephphatha Center Staff**

#### **Michigan:**

**James Pagels**—Director  
School Psychologist

**Barbara Weichel**—Secretary

**Shirley Danz**—Curriculum  
Consultant/Inservice Coordinator

**Kathy Krause**—Instructional  
Consultant

**Darlene Swoveland**—School  
Psychologist

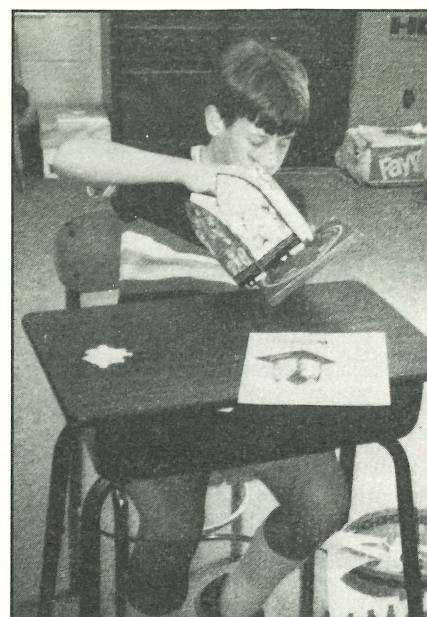
**Gail Vahlbusch**—On-Site  
Consultant

#### **Illinois:**

**James Krone**—Director



*Mrs. DeMumbrum and students using new religion program.*



## CEF opens opportunity for new program

Michigan District Church Extension Fund, in partnership with Lutheran Special Education Ministries, is working to bring Christ to children with special learning difficulties.

An extended special education teacher's guide was prepared for use with "The Simplified Catechism," available from Northwestern Publishing House. Co-authors of the guide are Carla McMichen Kling and Loren Popke.

The program provides Bible stories and instruction in Christian doctrine for students with special needs who are preparing for confirmation. It has also been successful when used as the religion program for elementary students who have learning disabilities.

The guide is available upon request to the curriculum consultant at Lutheran Special Education Ministries in Detroit.

The project was made possible by a grant from the Michigan District CEF.

## *He Loves Us Too*

We are God's special children.  
He knows each special need.  
Our hurt and our frustration  
To learn, to hear, to see.

Our list of needs is lengthy:  
We need much love to cope,  
Kind teachers, parents, counselors,  
A chance, a dream, a hope.

Someone who understands  
The hurt that can be felt  
When failure seems to be  
All that we are dealt.

Gentle, loving shepherds  
Who guide us patiently  
To overcome those failures  
And be all we can be.

God send these caring shepherds  
To lead us day by day  
To love us and to teach us,  
And chase the hurt away.

*Dedicated to the staff and teachers  
of Lutheran Special Education Minis-  
tries. They are those "caring shep-  
herds."—Carole Schlesselman, 1991*

## **Translation:**

Here's the translation from the "story" on page 2:

I suspect that the child with a learning disability must frequently experience an Alice in Wonderland existence. Often we find that he must cope with an unstable world, inconsistent adults and haphazard perceptions. He's confused by the crazy symbols we give him, pressured by the length of time in which to do it, and frustrated by his repeated failures. He does not learn in a traditional way and so we must teach him differently. Let me tell you more about him.



## 1991 Ephphatha Award presented

Lutheran Special Education Ministries, formerly Lutheran School for the Deaf, Detroit, is pleased to announce that Mrs. Linda Duesler, Walnut Creek, CA, is the recipient of the 1991 Ephphatha Award.

As a ministry dedicated to opening the doors of Christian education to children with special learning needs, Lutheran Special Education Ministries established the Ephphatha Award in 1984. This award recognizes individuals in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod who give time and talent to enable children with special learning needs to receive a Christian education.

For the past 21 years, Mrs. Duesler has shared her gifts and training in special education. She established the His, Too Preschool, a unique preschool with the ability to integrate children with various physical disabilities with "normal" children. This happened well before mainstreaming was widely accepted. Her openness to the children other schools would turn away is a wonderful example for others to follow as a response to Christ's pronouncement, "Let the little children come unto Me."

Mrs. Duesler has been the sole director of His, Too Preschool. She extended the regular session (September through June) to include a summer schedule "because the children need it."

The preschool has helped children with cerebral palsy, colostomies, language delays, spina bifida, developmental delays, blindness, also non-ambulatory and those as yet undiagnosed.



*From left, Rev. Paul Meyer, pastor at Trinity Lutheran Church, Walnut Creek, CA; Linda Duesler, Ephphatha Award recipient; and Gregg Braun, Director of Development for Lutheran Special Education Ministries, Detroit, MI.*

The His, Too Preschool became the feeder for the pre-kindergarten/kindergarten programs of Valley Lutheran School, Walnut Creek, CA.

Mrs. Duesler is married and lives in Concord, CA. She graduated from San Francisco State University, obtaining her BA degree in 1963 and her MA degree in special education in 1969. Linda, a member of the Lutheran Education Association Early Childhood Educators, is the kindergarten teacher at

Valley Lutheran School and is a member of Trinity Lutheran Church, Walnut Creek.

By presenting the Ephphatha Award to Mrs. Duesler, Lutheran Special Education Ministries acknowledges the time and talent of a very caring person who is committed to ministering to children with special needs. We pray that others in the Lutheran church will follow her example so that all God's children may receive a Christian education.

The award was given to Mrs. Duesler at the June 2 worship service at Trinity, Walnut Creek. Many of her present and former students were involved in the worship service.

The service and award were a great way to thank God for the talents of Linda Duesler and the way she shares His blessings with His special children.

### *Going for a million!*

Thanks to all the groups that collect and send in Campbell labels for the Labels for Education Program. This year, we set a goal of 1 million labels, which will enable our ministry to receive a new van. For more information about the products that are eligible to help us reach our goal, please send your name and address to Lutheran Special Education Ministries, 6861 E. Nevada, Detroit, MI 48234. All labels must be received by Feb. 28, 1992.

### Statement of Ministry

**With the knowledge of God's love and desire that God's love be revealed through our ministry, Lutheran Special Education Ministries serves to enable children with special learning needs to receive a Christian education.**

# The Advocate

*for Students with Special Learning Needs*

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class  
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The ADVOCATE for Students with Special Learning Needs  
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