

Providing a much-needed service:

On-site consultant program helps many children

by Kim Plummer Krull

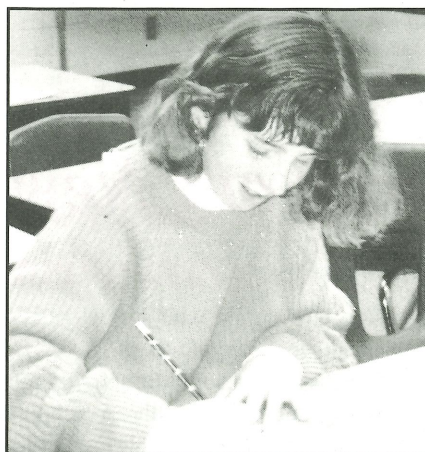
When Robbie transferred to St. Paul Lutheran School in Oak Lawn, Ill., last fall, the slight, shy eighth-grader was struggling with a number of learning disabilities related to his eyesight problems. But what worried Robbie's parents more was their son's sagging self-esteem.

"They were concerned that he needed to develop confidence. He had become a victim-kind of child and was feeling worse about himself every day," said St. Paul principal Darlene Agner.

But today, Robbie's parents wring their hands less often. Already this school year their son has learned valuable study skills and strategies to help him cope with his visual disadvantages. He gets one-on-one assistance with troublesome subjects. After failing twice before, Robbie even scored the highest grade on the ominous eighth-grade U.S. Constitution test.

Along with the special education skills provided by an on-site consultant, Principal Darlene Agner says, "It's the spirit of sharing and caring that's so important. Isn't that what Christianity is all about?"

Who sparked the change? Robbie's parents and principal credit Terry Sohn, the Lutheran Special Education Minis-



Many students take advantage of special services offered by on-site consultants.

tries on-site consultant.

"Terry provided the positive reinforcement and methods of attack he so desperately needed for his studies," Agner said of Robbie, whose name has been changed for this story. "She became a partner in his learning process. He grew to the point that he was willing and eager to work with her."

Sohn is one of four special education teachers in the on-site consultant program offered through Lutheran Special Education Ministries' Illinois office. The program also is available in Michigan and New York. These teachers serve Lutheran schools as consultants, educational evaluators and workshop leaders. They tailor programs to fit a school's specific challenges, focusing on ways teachers and parents can help special needs students and working with the youngsters themselves.

Now in its second year, the Illinois

program has won rave reviews.

"This is a very, very worthwhile program," said Keith Wilharm, principal at Immanuel Lutheran School in Palatine, Ill. "Special education teaching skills aren't always available through Lutheran schools. But when you have a teacher who has the professional expertise plus his heart in the Christian nurturing that is so important in a Lutheran education, it's a wonderful combination."

"The number of students with special needs is growing," Wilharm says. The wide gap in ability levels often frustrates those on both sides of the teacher's desk.

"That's where the program is so valuable," said Wilharm, whose school is served by on-site consultant Inez Petersen. "Inez gives a teacher somewhere to turn without the teacher having to start with step-one research or make dozens of telephone calls. The teacher describes the problem, and Inez will say try this technique or that methodology."

The problems tackled by on-site consultants vary from learning disabilities to behavior problems to providing adequate challenges for gifted students. Consider a sampling:

- Two young sisters coping with the death of their mother. "Inez gave their teachers strategies to help keep the girls engaged in classwork and from falling into a deep depression," Wilharm said.
- A seventh-grader, home-schooled by his missionary parents, struggling to adjust to a more traditional classroom. "Inez helped both him and his teachers get on track during the transition," Wilharm said.
- A second-grader with a severe attention deficit disorder who disrupted his class. By afternoon, both the child and his teacher were desperate.

(Continued on Page 2.)

On-Site Consultants

(Continued from Page 1.)

"That's when Terry would take him and work with him individually," Agner said. "Her help got both him and his teacher through the day."

Lutheran Special Education Ministries started the on-site consultant program as a cost-efficient means of allowing more special needs children to receive a Lutheran school education.

"Most Lutheran schools can't afford a full-time resource room," said Jim Krone, director of Lutheran Special Education Ministries Illinois office, based on the campus of Concordia University, River Forest, Ill. The program also coincides with the trend toward inclusion, the mainstreaming of special needs children instead of separating them in resource rooms.

Each consultant visits the assigned school one day (or half-day) each week. The consultant's time is filled with testing, observing classrooms, working with individual students, advising parents and guiding teachers. Along with the consultant's services, the school also can tap other resources of Lutheran Special Education Ministries, including a psychologist, educational diagnostician and the other special education teachers.

"We know more schools need and want this service, but we don't have the budget that can make that happen for them," Jim Krone said. "More funding, of course, would allow more children to remain in a Christian educational setting and still have their special needs met."

Another one of those youngsters is a St. Paul sixth-grader who struggles with an attention deficit disorder, visual problems and depression. Terry Sohn meets weekly with him, working on eye-tracking activities and reinforcing his studies.

"He seems to be enjoying school these days," principal Darlene Agner said. "He has more self-confidence and we see lots of smiles."

Along with the special education skills provided by an on-site consultant, Agner says, "It's the spirit of sharing and caring that's so important. And isn't that what Christianity is all about?"

For more information on this program, call Lutheran Special Education Ministries at (313) 368-1220 in Detroit; (708) 209-3344 in Illinois; and (914) 395-4710 in New York.



Denise Norman, on-site consultant at Emanuel Lutheran School in Patchogue, N.Y., with one of her students.

Growth also continues with our New York program

by Paula Rosen

Who is the child with special needs? What can we do to help them?

These two questions are frequently asked by educators in Lutheran schools. This may seem unremarkable . . . but it's not.

Several years ago, regular classroom teachers believed there was little they could do to teach children with learning disabilities or emotional problems. Today, teachers and administrators are opening their hearts and minds to many more children who may have been turned away from a Christian education just a few years ago.

A couple years ago, the Lutheran Schools Association made a commitment to bring Lutheran Special Education Ministries to New York.

By all accounts, this partnership has been a huge success! In the 18 months that this ministry has been providing services in New York, there have been 22 workshop presentations to teachers, parents, administrators and college students. It is wonderful to have the opportunity to inspire people to help children with special learning needs to receive a Christian education.

In March, New York Office Director Paula Rosen will present information to

professors at Concordia College, Bronxville, N.Y., in an effort to expand understanding of students with learning disabilities at all levels.

The 1992-93 school year has brought special education services to three Lutheran schools on a regular basis. Our two on-site consultants, Denise Norman and Theresa Jones, serve three schools.

One day a week, Denise Norman works with teachers and students at Emanuel Lutheran School in Patchogue to provide strategies for better classroom performance.

Theresa Jones works at Our Saviour Lutheran School in Rego Park and Holy Trinity Community School in Hollis, facilitating change for the teachers and students who come to her.

The comments from the principals at all three schools have been extremely positive. Holy Trinity Principal Linda Mitchell, Our Saviour Principal James Kamprath and Emanuel Principal Paul Schulz said these two young women are always full of helpful suggestions. In fact, Denise Norman's principal hopes she will become a permanent member of their faculty some day. Pastor Robert Sonnenberg at Holy Trinity was impressed by Theresa's abilities during a recent parent conference.

Shannon's story

by Gail Vahlbush
Michigan On-Site Consultant

As adults, we look at 7-year-olds and envy their happy-go-lucky approach to life. First graders smile, tease others and generally don't have a care in the world.

As a first grader, Shannon shared laughter with friends, but she was also very much aware of a weakness. Shannon needed a special teacher to help her with classroom assignments. At that time, Shannon was a student at St. Stephen Lutheran School in Detroit and received daily resource room help.

In the fall of 1991, St. Stephen closed its day school. Shannon enrolled at Calvary Lutheran School, Lincoln Park. Shannon, then 10, looked forward to going to a new school. However, she worried about meeting new children and attending a school without a resource room to help her—something she knew she needed. What Shannon didn't know was that Calvary Lutheran School did have an on-site consultant.

Working as a team, her teacher, principal, parent and consultant reviewed Shannon's learning needs. Together, they developed a program that enabled Shannon to receive a Christian education and be successful in her studies. The plan included modifications that focused on

her strengths to counteract her weaknesses. This program was monitored, refined—and successful.

Examples of Shannon's program include using a calculator for math computation, test questions restated in an understandable way, and responsibility for a limited amount of content in certain subject areas. The classroom teacher and on-site consultant meet regularly to discuss and review present modifications and adjust them as needed.

Shannon has adjusted well to her new school and is successful in her studies. We praise God for Shannon's success and know that she is happy and thankful.

It's a joy to look into a sixth grade classroom and see a giggling young lady enjoying her friends and classmates.



Shannon

Nominations now being accepted

The Ephphatha Award was established to recognize the many dedicated people throughout The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod who have made outstanding contributions to the Christian education of special needs children in his or her congre-

gation, community or the church at large.

We are committed to opening the doors of Christian education to all children. This commitment is reflected in our Statement of Ministry:

"With the knowledge of God's love and the 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."

To accomplish this, Lutheran Special Education Ministries has a continuum of special education programs and services, including a special education day school, resource rooms in Lutheran schools in Michigan, New York and Illinois, and evaluation and consultation services.

Lutheran Special Education Ministries wants to acknowledge the time and talents of individuals who are also committed to ministry to special needs children by presenting the Ephphatha Award. It is our prayer that others will then be moved to work on behalf of these special children.

Nominations accompanied by a record of service should be sent by March 30 to: **Mr. Roger DeMeyere, Executive Director, Lutheran Special Education Ministries, 6861 E. Nevada, Detroit, MI 48234.**

1873 Reunion 1993

Lutheran School for the Deaf 120th anniversary

Lutheran Special Education Ministries (formerly Lutheran School for the Deaf) is pleased to announce a reunion Aug. 16-23 to celebrate the 120th anniversary of our ministry. All former students, staff members, teachers and houseparents are invited to attend.

Program

- **Monday-Wednesday, Aug. 16-18:** Fellowship; sight-seeing tour; captioned movies shown in evenings.
- **Thursday, Aug. 19:** Trip to Frankenmuth, including shopping; a visit to the famous Bavarian Inn Restaurant, etc.
- **Friday, Aug. 20:** Fellowship.
- **Saturday, Aug. 21:** All-day open house tour; old movies of campus; display of old pictures; evening banquet and presentation of skits.
- **Sunday, Aug. 22:** Continental breakfast followed by church service.

For more information, please contact: Lutheran Special Education Ministries, 6861 E. Nevada Ave., Detroit, MI 48234; (313) 368-1220.

Making a difference

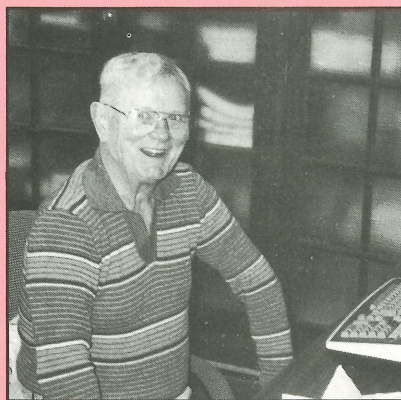
Alfred Brokop has been keeping the mailing list of Lutheran Special Education Ministries up-to-date since 1975. A volunteer, Al takes care of all address changes, additions and deletions to the mailing list.

Al did not want to sit still after he retired—he wanted to give back something for all the years he worked.

Al has volunteered more than 6,200 hours at Lutheran Special Education Ministries. He even takes work home.

Roger DeMeyere, executive director, said, "Al is a blessing to our ministry. He is very dependable and always smiling. His work on our mailing list has saved our staff time and money. We thank God for Al."

Al and his wife, Sophia, live in New Baltimore, Mich.



Al Brokop

If you would like to be a volunteer like Al in Michigan, Illinois or New York, please contact the Lutheran Special Education Ministries office in your area:

Detroit: (313) 368-1220

Illinois: (708) 209-3344

New York: (914) 395-4710

The Advocate

for Students with Special Learning Needs

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A pour-over unitrust may interest you

by Dick Johnson

Recently, I had the opportunity to work with two families, helping them develop their estate plans. Both families had the strong desire to provide for their children and to provide a significant gift to the work of the Lord and their church.

During our discussions, it was made perfectly clear that both families were concerned about their children inheriting a large sum of money—concerns over the effect this would have on their children's financial lives. It became obvious to me that these families were prime candidates for a "pour-over unitrust."

Many of you know that a unitrust is an irrevocable trust funded during the donor's lifetime. This trust provides an

income for the donor's lifetime at a set percentage of return (between 5 and 7 percent—the donor selects the rate of return). When this return rate is less than the amount earned on the trust principal, the excess income is returned to principal. In effect, this provides an increasing amount of return for the donor each year. A unitrust is an excellent way for families that have extra funds which are not currently providing a significant monetary return.

However, this was not the case with these two families. Both families felt they might need their funds in the future. They weren't comfortable putting their funds into a trust irrevocably (which means the agreement cannot be changed), hence the pour-over aspect of the trust.

In both these families, when the surviving spouse dies, the entire estate will be used to fund a unitrust. In both cases, the children were designated as the income beneficiaries of the trust fund.



Students decorate their class Christmas tree in early December.

The children will receive an income from the trust for 20 years, at which time several ministries will receive portions of the trust principal. Over the 20-year lifetime of the trusts, the children will receive more in income than if they had received an outright gift—plus the ministries will receive significantly larger gifts.

If you would like additional information about pour-over unitrusts, or need help with your estate planning, please fill in the coupon on this page and return it to me today.

- Please send me more information on pour-over unitrusts.
- Please send me information on making a will.
- Please contact me for a confidential visit to discuss this matter at no cost or obligation.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ ZIP: _____

Birth Date: _____ Phone: (_____) _____

Planned Giving Counselor
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