



Many children were helped with their studies on a one-to-one basis during the last school year.

It's been 10 years:

Helping children with special needs in northern Illinois

Chicago. When people think of Chicago, the words “big,” “windy,” “lots of traffic,” “too many people” and perhaps “Lake Michigan” come to mind.

As of the end of October last year, the city of Chicago had 553 public schools that enrolled 409,499 students. That doesn't even include the private or parochial schools. It's the third largest school system in the United States. That's a lot of children! Imagine the paperwork; the bureaucracy.

Imagine if you lived in Chicago and suspected your child had a learning handicap. It would be a massive job even to get your child tested in the public schools.

Even though the state has been required by law since 1975 to test and help your child, the immense bureaucracy of a city this size could really slow things down.

That's why, when LCMS Northern Illinois District Education Executive

Jim Kirchhoff was invited to serve on the first Ephphatha Award Nominations Committee in Detroit in 1982, he became interested in the resource room program Lutheran Special Education Ministries offered students in the Detroit area.

“I saw what was going on and I heard about the work going on in Detroit,” he said. Could anything like that ever work in the Lutheran schools in Chicago? he asked. That way, the church could really help children with learning handicaps who attended Lutheran schools in the northern Illinois metropolitan area. The schools would be able to work with these special children to provide them with a Christ-centered education.

In the past, Lutheran schools were unable to provide services for the learning handicapped child directly. Students with special learning needs relied on the public school system for special education.

Work begins

Meetings were held at two sites in Chicago—asking if the schools would be interested in starting a program like this. As a result of these meetings, 15 Lutheran schools expressed an interest in opening resource rooms for their students.

Resource rooms are separate classrooms in the school that are operated by a Lutheran Special Education Ministries' teacher. Students leave their regular classrooms and go to this resource room for a few hours each day. There, the teacher provides special learning experiences, targeted to the individual child, to help them cope with their learning disability. The teacher helps the student to learn skills to succeed in the regular classroom. The resource room was designed so students could continue attending their local Lutheran school, while at the same time receive support and instruction from a specially trained teacher.

By the 1984-85 school year, three resource room teachers (Joy Conrad, Linda Mikottis and Cheryl Tietjen) were working at five area schools: Hope, Chicago; Trinity, Chicago; Jehovah, Chicago; Pilgrim, Chicago; and St. John, Mayfair.

The next year, the number of participating schools increased to eight; the next year, to 15.

Agreement signed

In May 1988, in an effort to provide continuing support for this work, representatives from four Northern Illinois Lutheran organizations signed an agreement with Lutheran School for the Deaf Special Education Ministries (now known as Lutheran Special Education Ministries) programs in metropolitan Chicago.

(Continued on next page.)

The agreement—signed by representatives from Lutheran Special Education Ministries, Concordia College at River Forest, Lutheran Church Charities Fund, LCMS Northern Illinois District and Lutheran Child and Family Services—outlined how the various organizations would work together to help Lutheran Special Education Ministries of Illinois continue meeting the needs of children with special learning needs.

Lutheran Special Education Ministries was responsible for the major funding and program administration. Concordia College donated the office space for the director and evaluation and consultation services' personnel. At that time, Lutheran Church Charities Fund provided financial support; the LCMS Northern Illinois District office served in an advisory capacity for current programs and also hosted an annual meeting for service evaluation. Lutheran Child and Family Services served as a counseling source for the families of children who participate in the program.

Times continue to change: on-site consultants

But the costs for maintaining the special resource rooms escalated, and many city Lutheran schools just no longer had the funds to keep them open—a problem the Lutheran schools in Detroit were experiencing also. In addition, more emphasis was being put

Dreams do come true

by Roger DeMeyere
Executive Director

It started with a dream. The year was 1983. A few Christians in northern Illinois shared a concern that the Gospel of Jesus Christ was being denied to handicapped children. Many Lutheran schools had their doors closed to children with special learning needs. But Lutheran leaders knew it didn't have to be this way. They dreamed about "open doors" after hearing about the expanded special education services in Michigan by Lutheran School for the Deaf, now known as Lutheran Special Education Ministries. They contacted Lutheran Special Education Ministries to ask for help.

Executive Director Rev. Rodney Rynearson and the Board of Directors were compelled to respond to bring Christian special education services to northern Illinois. They, too, dreamed of open doors. The rest is history. A partnership emerged that flourishes to this day. Services that started in 1984 have blossomed.

Lutheran Special Education Ministries has teachers regularly assigned to 18 Lutheran schools and provides evaluation and consultation services for many others. More than 500 children were served this past year alone. All because people dreamed and nurtured a dream with action. I praise and thank God that we are able to celebrate this 10-year anniversary. It is still just a beginning . . . for we now have another dream: to open the doors wider! Help us make that dream come true. God bless you.

on "mainstreaming" (keeping the special needs student with the regular class students by the public education system).

In order to continue serving the needs of these special children, Lutheran Special Education Ministries initiated the on-site consultant program. By the 1991-92 school year, only six area schools had resource rooms.

However, five schools used on-site consultants. By the 1993-94 school year, four schools had resource room teachers; 13 used on-site consultants.

The on-site consultants serve the schools as a consultant with teachers and parents, 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. They also work with the children themselves.

"We know more schools need and want this service," said Jim Krone, who is director of the Illinois program. "Therefore, in order to make the cost of the program within reach of a Lutheran School, Lutheran Special Education Ministries uses money received through donations to offset the program cost by 50 percent."

Our goal remains the same

The services have changed over the years, but the goal remains the same:

"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."

Many children received help

Lutheran Special Education Ministries helped 1,493 children and 166 churches during the 1993-94 school year. Children were helped through resource rooms, consultation and testing in Michigan, Illinois and New York. In Michigan alone, more than 682 children were helped in 12 resource rooms and five partnership schools with consulting services. In Illinois, 636 were helped, and in New York 175 students with learning handicaps were helped to receive a Christian education. Through our Ephphatha outreach program we were also able to help 166 churches to share God's love with children who have a learning handicap.

Roger DeMeyere, executive director of Lutheran Special Education Ministries, stated, "We are very thankful that the Lord has allowed us to help 1,493 children. Our goal is to try and help every child who has a learning handicap to know God's love."



Around the ministry

Michigan

by Gloria Burley, Director
Michigan Program

This fall, Lutheran Special Education Ministries is joining in partnership with Bethany Lutheran School in Detroit. Bethany will be the only Lutheran School in Detroit with a resource room. In addition, this resource room is a special one, for it will provide the opportunity for formerly self-contained students to experience some regular education classroom time.

This room, staffed by a Lutheran Special Education Ministries teacher, will provide direct instruction to students in language arts, mathematics, science and social studies. All other classes, such as religion, music, art and physical education, will be taught in the regular classroom.

Students targeted for this service have good social skills and need the opportunity to interact in regular, day-to-day settings. Bethany offers them this opportunity. Lutheran Special Education Ministries welcomes this new school in partnership. Together, we can enable children with special learning needs to get a Christian education.

Ephphatha Center

by Jim Pagels, Director
Ephphatha Center

It was a pleasure for our department to be a part of the Lutheran Sunday School Convention in Detroit this summer. We were impressed by the dedicated teachers from across the country who were enthusiastic about enriching their ministry to God's children. There were many wonderful resources at the convention that were available to increase skills and renew spirits.

Additionally, this event enabled us to share our department's national scope with Sunday school teachers, pastors and parents. These caretakers were searching for materials and techniques to assist them in dealing with children having special needs in Sunday schools, instruction classes, etc. In accomplishing our goal, Kathy Krause led a sectional dealing with

teaching learning disabled children within the Sunday school setting. At the Lutheran Special Education Ministries display, we met many individuals who found the Teacher's Guide to the simplified catechism useful for providing instruction to children who have limited reading levels. Incidentally, this guide is available from us free.

We thank God for these opportunities. If you are aware of anyone who would benefit from our services, please feel free to have them contact us at Ephphatha Center.

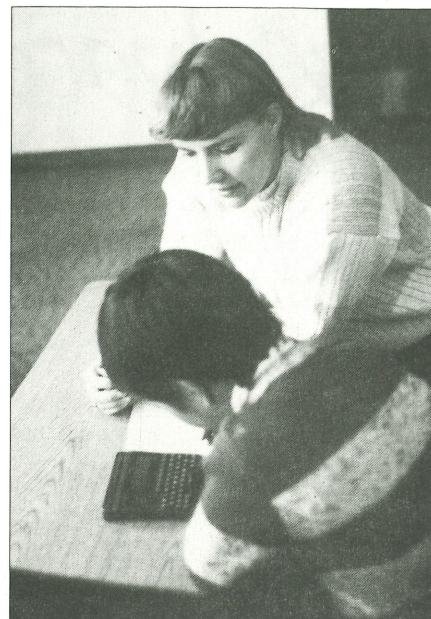
New York

by Paula Rosen, Director
New York Program

Leaves are beginning to turn lovely colors, the air is a little crisper and brand new shoes pound the pavement, making their way to school. As God provides us with the change of seasons, Lutheran Special Education Ministries provides for more and more programs for children with special needs here in the New York metropolitan area.

This year, we will have seven partnership schools, three more than last year. Also, Emanuel Lutheran School in Patchogue, N.Y., and Holy Trinity Community School in Hollis, N.Y., have increased their programs for children this year. And we have already had inquiries for the 1995-96 school year!

Children like Michael, Jorge, Geena, Dominique, Darren and Raymond will have the advantage of the extra help they need in order to be

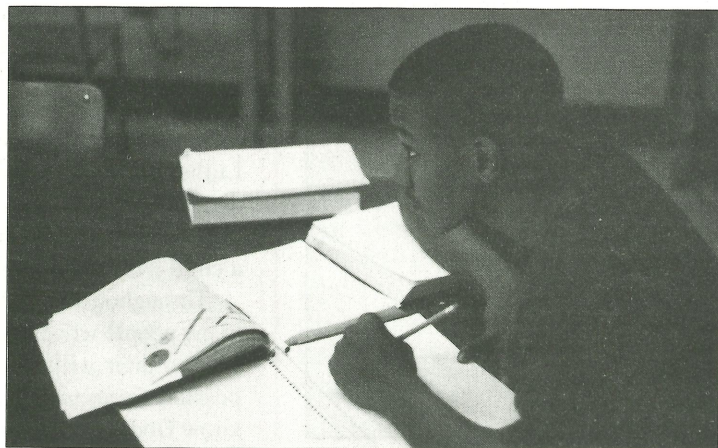


successful in their Lutheran school. The Lord's blessings are like a shower of fall leaves—colorful and beautiful. To Him give all the praise and glory!

Illinois

by Jim Krone, Director
Illinois Program

This school year is off to a fast start. We are now in partnership with 18 Lutheran schools. There are to be eight teachers providing both resource room and consultant services to these schools. Three new teachers have joined our ministry team: Patricia Demos, Su Stevenson and Margaret Ellenstein. Our eighth faculty member is yet to be named. The new school year came faster than our ability to provide services for the needs at Lutheran High School South. Our staff is focused on helping both teachers and parents understand how to give these special children confidence in themselves and reassurance that they are all a part of God's family.



Lutheran Special Education Ministries teachers also provide services to students at the high school level.

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for Students with Special Learning Needs

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This process is accomplished by volunteer effort, including the services of Al Brokop. He is also responsible for address changes. When the USPS notifies us of an address change, we are charged 38 cents. This amounted to

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about \$1,500 in 1994. We hope that our readers would notify us of any changes or duplications so we can keep our address list accurate.

We want to be good stewards of your gifts. Help us by assisting in this process. Thank you!

Where there's a will; there's a way!

This old saying has been around for a long time, but it is especially true regarding Christian estate planning and Lutheran Special Education Ministries. When there is a will that names Lutheran Special Education Ministries as beneficiary, this is a way to make sure that a Christian education is provided to a child with a learning handicap.

Throughout the years, there have been many people who have named our ministry in their wills. They have made it possible for us to help many children to know God's love.

More than 60 percent of the people in the United States never write a will. That's sad, because when a person dies without a will, the state steps in to help in the final disposition of that estate. So it's possible that your estate—instead of going where you want it to go and for the purposes you believe in—could go to something other than what you would want.

Lutheran Special Education Ministries uses the gifts from estates to help in our mission to help children. Let's make sure that we do write a will. With a will, there is a way for you to determine where you want the final disbursement of your estate to go.

If you need any advice about estate planning or about revising your estate plan, please fill out the coupon above. We have estate planners who can help you. Through a will, you can help Lutheran Special Education Ministries reach out and share the greatest gift of all—God's love—with children who have learning handicaps.