

On-site consultants:

Helping students and their teachers to work together

Being a teacher is not an easy job. They are responsible for teaching an average of 25 children each year—that's 25 separate personalities who learn in different ways and at their own pace. And they must cover all kinds of different subjects: math, reading, spelling, social studies, geography, science, language arts.

But what does a teacher do when one of those children just can't grasp the concept of reading? or spelling? or math? Should she slow down the whole class; rely on that child's parents to help him or her catch up outside school hours? Should she just do the best she can and leave the child behind?

Another aspect also concerns the teacher: Is the teacher herself doing

something wrong? What more can be done—or should have been done—to teach that child?

That's why when one child needs special attention, it's a relief for the teacher to have someone to turn to.

That's what happened to teacher Beata Halter not too long ago at Pilgrim Lutheran School in Chicago.

Teacher saw the need

Ronnie was in Beata's classroom. He'd come through kindergarten fine. Although he didn't volunteer much information, he answered when he was called on. He learned his letters and sounds, just like every other kindergarten.

However, about the middle of first grade and into second grade, his teacher noticed Ronnie wasn't learning to read like the other children. He had a good grasp of numbers and math—and overall his intelligence and general knowledge was normal or above. He just wasn't learning to read; he didn't like to read, write or spell.

His lack of reading ability in the classroom began to affect him socially. He became defiant to his teachers and lost his temper easily. He didn't want to do his homework, and that caused arguments at home too.

"I think Ronnie was always harder on himself than other people were . . . and maybe thought worse about himself than the other children did," Beata said. Ronnie had always been liked, she commented, because of his athletic ability and because he had a good sense of humor and was a good friend to others.

But, Beata said, "I don't know if he always sensed that. Sometimes children who have learning difficulties often ostracize themselves."

His parents wanted to find out what was going on with Ronnie. They wanted to help him through any problems he had—and wanted to do what was best for their son.

Testing completed

Eventually, Ronnie went through the testing for learning disabilities at Lutheran Special Education Ministries in Illinois. The staff and parents agreed that Ronnie would benefit by spending time in a resource room at his school, working one-on-one with Cheryl Saiki of Lutheran Special Education Ministries.

At first, Ronnie was angry about going to a special classroom for an

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During the 1995-96 school year, Lutheran Special Education Ministries is helping to provide special services for students in 50 schools located in Michigan (20 schools), Illinois (23 schools) and New York (seven schools). See the chart on the next page. The Lord has truly blessed our ministry to children with special learning needs!

hour each day. He'd go to the resource room, Beata commented, but she wasn't sure he did any work. "I know he didn't talk to Cheryl for about a month."

A network of support

However, what helped Beata when she had Ronnie back in the regular classroom was the counseling and support *she* received from Cheryl. By regularly working with Cheryl, Beata learned how to support and encourage Ronnie throughout the school day.

For example, Beata learned there were some things Ronnie couldn't do well. In particular, he had trouble organizing and spelling. Cheryl advised

Beata not to expect Ronnie to take the regular spelling test and not to expect his written work to match what he said orally. She suggested alternate ways to help Ronnie learn spelling and organizational skills.

As they worked together, Cheryl and Beata talked about what they expected from Ronnie each week. "I let her know my deadlines for activities beforehand," Beata said, "so she was aware of what work was coming up for Ronnie."

For example, in literature, Beata provided Cheryl with a list of books she was considering using in class. Any of the books would have been good to use in the regular classroom, but "I asked her [Cheryl] for help on which ones would be better for Ronnie," Beata said. Cheryl looked the list over and commented on which one she thought would be

best for Ronnie to learn from.

Then, Cheryl worked on the book with Ronnie during his resource room time—to help him understand and be able to participate in discussion in his regular classroom. That helped Ronnie with his own feelings of self-worth.

However, it's not as if Beata "catered to" Ronnie because he was in a special class. Each teacher should know each student's strengths, weaknesses and disabilities. Once you know a student's disability, you don't water everything down, you just work with them to give them a coping technique to work through their difficulty.

Together, Cheryl and Beata talked

with Ronnie's parents during parent/teacher conferences and prepared Ronnie's report cards. They even talked about where a child who is easily distracted should sit in the classroom. Little things like that help the regular classroom teacher do the best they can while the child is in the classroom.

"Cheryl guided me, told me when I was on target, or when I was expecting too much or too little of him," Beata said. "In turn, Cheryl helped Ronnie understand the problem wasn't his fault. He became more attentive and got his homework done. I was amazed by how he changed!"

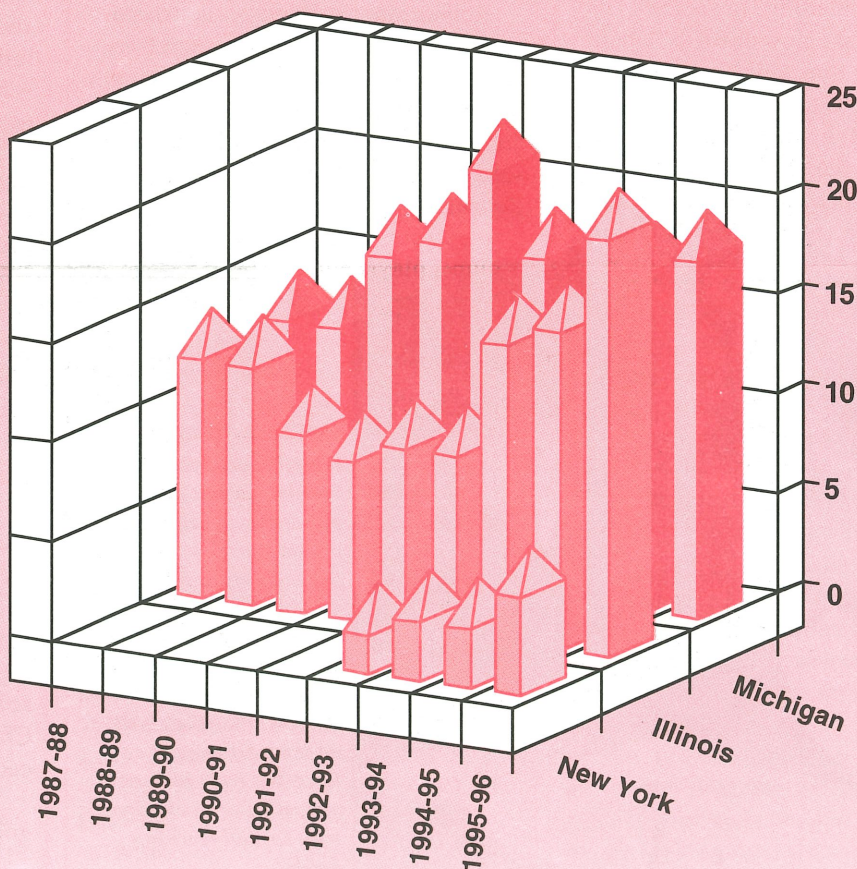
Our ministry today

The need for our ministry's working with handicapped children has increased over the years (see chart below). In the 1987-88 school year, Lutheran Special Education Ministries had a total of 28 partner schools (14 in Michigan; 14 in Illinois).

In the 1995-96 school year, teachers with Lutheran Special Education Ministries work in partnership with 50 schools (20 in Michigan; 23 in Illinois; seven in New York).

Lutheran Special Education Ministries provides teachers in full or part time resource rooms where students can go for a couple hours each school day. They also provide on-site consultants so individual classroom teachers can ask for help with specific children.

If you'd like to know more about how you can help with the ministry of Lutheran Special Education Ministries, call (313) 368-1220.



A help when help was needed

"So many things have happened in that young boy's life that I'm sure there were years that when a lot of children were concentrating on learning and academics, his energies were elsewhere. But, absolutely, the program has helped him academically and emotionally."

"For me as a teacher," Beata added, "emotionally it is nice to know sometimes that I was on target about certain children, that it wasn't something I was doing incorrectly, and it wasn't something the child was purposely doing."

Support (like the support Beata received from Cheryl) can help reassure a teacher that he or she is doing the best job possible—teachers like to feel good about the job they're doing!

A different Ronnie today

If Ronnie didn't have Lutheran Special Education Ministries' teachers working with him, Beata believes Ronnie would still be struggling—both socially and in the classroom. Now, she comments, "I think that, for Ronnie, school is a place where he is happy."

Cheryl Saiki worked with Ronnie in a series of special sessions for four years. Ronnie's now in the sixth grade and has caught up with the rest of his class. What's more important is that Ronnie feels good about himself.

But there are still thousands of children out there who don't feel good about themselves. They don't see themselves as "learning disabled" or "challenged." They see themselves as outcasts. They need to feel the love of Christ. These children need to see Christ in all aspects of their learning environment.

Please help us to help other children like Ronnie to receive a Christian education! Call us today at (313) 368-1220.

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Around the ministry

Michigan

by Gloria Burley, Director
Michigan Program

The beginning of this school year marks the beginning of a new era. For the first time, there are no self-contained classes on the Lutheran Special Education Ministries campus. The final chapel service last June signified the closing of the self-contained school, North Detroit Lutheran.

The closing of North Detroit Lutheran did not signify an end of educational service to children with special learning needs. Rather, it is a beginning to offer a greater continuum of services to these children in regular education Christian schools.

In Michigan, services are available from half-day-a-week consultants to half-time resource rooms to full-time resource rooms to self-contained resource rooms. By offering such a broad range of services, we are better able to meet the changing needs of each child.

For instance, consider the child who needs to be in a special education room most of the day. This child would be in a self-contained resource room for academics but would be part of the regular education class for devotions, religion, art, music, physical education, lunch, recess and other activities like after school sports, clubs, plays, etc.

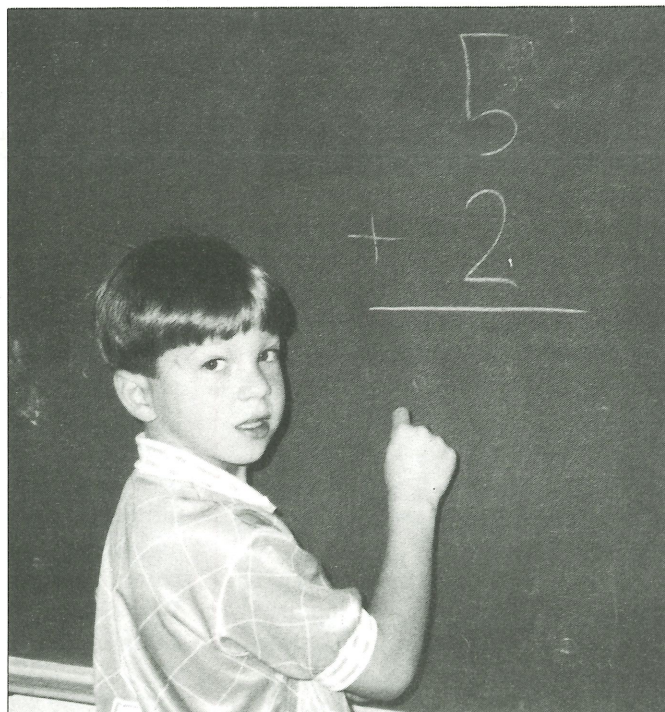
As the child progresses, his academic needs may change, so he may only visit the resource room for reading and math instruction. Eventually, he could require support in some areas from the resource room teacher and would spend most of his day in regular education classes. By having a variety of services available, he can move from being

fully supported by a special education teacher to achieving personal independence. In addition, while he grows academically, he is also developing social skills within the non-handicapped population, those with whom he will work and worship and play after he leaves school.

It is with great joy that we announce the availability of three "self-contained" classrooms within the Detroit area. Bethany Lutheran School hosted the pilot program last year and the students met with academic and social success as evidenced by their inclusion on the honor roll, cheerleading squad and basketball teams. The resource room at Bethany represents a model of professional teamwork and Christian support for all children. New self-contained programs will be offered this year at East Bethlehem, Detroit, and St. Paul, Farmington Hills.

Let's praise God for making these opportunities available to our children. Please be faithful in your prayers and support as we continue this great ministry to these dear children, enabling them to receive a Christian education.

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Many children benefit from the services of Lutheran Special Education Ministries in Michigan, Illinois and New York.

The Advocate

for Students with Special Learning Needs

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Ephphatha Center

by **Kathy Krause, Director
Ephphatha Center**

Just as a young bird stretches its wings to the sun for strengthening warmth, so too Ephphatha Center looks to God's Word for strength. In the New Testament Jesus often speaks about children and how important it is for us to teach them. "Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these" (Matt. 19:14; Mark 10:14; and Luke 18:16).

"Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord" (Eph. 6:4).

What a joy to have these words as guidelines to parents, teachers and pastors. The problem occurs when children have learning difficulties and they are unable to read and understand material in the traditional manner. Rather than saying, "This child can't come to Sunday school because she can't read and doesn't listen properly" or "We can't confirm his child because he can't understand the catechism" or "None of us are trained to work with special children," we must try to meet the spiritual needs of these children in whatever way possible.

In just the month of August, Ephphatha Center received inquiries from 67 congregations in 27 states asking for assistance in locating appropriate religious material for children with a variety of special needs. It is gratifying to know that these chil-

dren of God will now know more about their Savior.

Ephphatha Center is thankful for the opportunity to gain strength from the light of the Son and "flap its wings" as we serve as a resource to those seeking ways to teach Jesus' love to His children with special learning needs.

New York

by **Paula Rosen, Director
New York Program**

Lutheran Special Education Ministries of New York has entered the fifth year of service to children with special learning needs in the New York area.

We have grown from a staff of one to a staff of seven. It is only since fall 1992 that we have placed teachers in local schools, yet we have served eight schools. We started with four schools, each with one half day one day a week on-site consultant teachers; now we have a full-time resource room and two half-time resource rooms plus five on-site consultant positions!

We have an addition to our teaching staff: **Lois Geary**. Lois attended St. John Lutheran Church and School in Glendale (which is home to one of our resource room schools) as a child. We are thrilled to have her working with us.

Two new schools join us this year: **Immanuel Lutheran School in Whitestone, N.Y.**, and **Redeemer Lutheran School in Glendale, N.Y.** We are still looking for a teacher for Leif Ericson Day School in Brooklyn.

Watching the program grow so quickly is proof of the need for Lutheran

Special Education Ministries here in New York. God does guide us to where we need to be and we need to be here at this time and in this place. His love is the lighthouse in the storm, ever directing us to provide for all His children.

Illinois

by **Jim Krone, Director
Illinois Program**

This year has seen a very busy beginning. We are now in partnership with 23 Lutheran schools. Eleven teachers provide both resource room and consultant services to these schools. Returning teachers are **Cheryl Saiki, Susan Lewis, Su Stevenson, Debbie Calabrese, Elease Adams, Patty Demos, Terry Sohn and Margaret Ellenstein**. Four new teachers have joined our ministry team: **Janice Gill, Truby Szweczyk, Colleen Dunnigan and Sue O'Donnell**. We thank God for providing us with these teachers, who are dedicated to preparing His special children to become all they can be.

We also thank God for answering our prayers for computers for our teachers' use in the classrooms. We had a phenomenal response to a request for used computers submitted in the "Northern Light" newsletter. We now have seven computers up and running in our classroom sites.

The interest and the excitement about our program in Christian day schools continues to grow. As always, we are looking forward to a very exciting, productive and busy school year.