



The Advocate

for Students with Special Learning Needs

Fall 1998

FOUNDED 1873 • Formerly Lutheran School for the Deaf

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Editor's note: In celebration of our 125th Anniversary, we're offering a special three-part series in The Advocate, "Lutheran Special Education Ministries: Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow." This is the third, and last, installment.

In this issue, President/CEO Roger DeMeyere shares with us his vision of where Lutheran Special Education Ministries will be in the years ahead, God willing.

Beyond the 125th – My Dream for LSEM

by Roger DeMeyere
President/CEO

Christ at the Center

With Jesus as the center, LSEM will reach out to children with special learning needs wherever they may be, to help them know Him and to prepare them for productive lives. LSEM will do this in partnership with others who share a vision to be "enablers" of Christ-centered education for these children.

Whoever Welcomes a Child

But who are these children? The picture in my mind's eye of serving "One Child at a Time" is developed in the words of Jesus, "Whoever welcomes a child like this in my name welcomes me." When the disciples were arguing who among them was the greatest, Jesus embraced a child. Who was that child? A deaf child? A mentally-impaired child? Cerebral palsied? A child with a handicap hidden inside? For those of us blessed with children with special challenges, let's get more personal. Picture your daughter. Your son. Or thousands of others "like this." Do you see a picture?

LSEM will always have difficulty describing the child it serves. That's why we often use the phrase "children with special learning needs." As a lover of irony, I find it humorous that we served almost 3,000 children last year as compared to 40 deaf children in 1975 and we still have not clearly-defined the child we serve. Amazing! Instead of spending too much time defining – thereby limiting – the population to be served, perhaps we should simply heed the word of Jesus': "Ephphatha," "Be opened."

Although we will continue to wrestle with this issue, our definitions will tend to include rather than exclude. As a result, I believe the LSEM of the future will, in faith, continue to serve thousands and thousands more children. And each child will be embraced by Jesus, not only in a snapshot of someone's mind, but also by the real arms of a teacher who welcomes this child in His name. And Jesus will smile.

Beyond Geographic Borders

The dream continues. Jesus has a pretty big vision that all may come to know Him. LSEM needs to think

BIG, too! Is our vision of reaching the entire United States a big vision? Yes. But is it big enough? Not really and here's why:

There are children with special learning needs in other countries. They, too, need to know Jesus and need to prepare for productive lives. As far as we know, there is no other organization such as LSEM that is divinely endowed, transformed, and positioned for such a time as this.

I see a time when we will be compelled to reach out beyond the borders of the United States just as we were compelled to reach beyond the Detroit metropolitan area and into Michigan . . . into Illinois . . . then New York . . . then Indiana . . . and then . . . who knows? With Jesus at the center of our mission, "all things are possible."

All things are possible. Even dreams! Just as our founders – by Christ's power and command – broke barriers for deaf children, so, too, will Christ use LSEM to break down barriers and open doors so that more children may come to Him. How else can we explain the expansion in partnership school sites

(Continued on back page)

Did You Know?

• According to some conservative estimates, at least one out of every 10 children has a special learning need.

• We serve children who have special learning needs by providing resource room teachers and consultants to partnership schools and by offering individual consultations and materials to parents, pastors, teachers and principals through our Ephphatha Center.

• And it is by God's grace and blessing that today we're annually serving more than 3,000 of these children across the nation, through our partnership schools in Michigan, Illinois, New York and Indiana and through our Ephphatha Center.

• **That we receive no federal, state, Synodical or district financial support and that 65% of our income comes from donors like you.**

As we approach this Christmas season, please remember us with your prayers and gifts. It is during this time of year that we especially rely upon the generosity of donors like you.

And this year it's especially true – since we are now serving even more children with special learning needs than last year. (For example, we're in partnership with 24 more parochial schools than last year, for a total of 90 schools, throughout Michigan, New York, Illinois and Indiana. That's a 36% increase in one year. Praise God!)

So thank you – for sharing your blessings, for lifting us up in prayer. May God continue to bless you and yours.

“Operation Confirmation” Helps Teachers of Confirmation

Do you have a Confirmation student who -

- struggles with reading more than most?
- has a hard time paying attention?
- can't seem to memorize even simple Bible verses?

If this describes your experience, then maybe “Operation Confirmation” could help you.

Through “Operation Confirmation,” we'll provide a six-page guide free-of-charge to teachers of Confirmation.

Entitled “Adapting Curriculum and Instruction for Students with Special Learning Needs,” this easy-to-use guide gives practical help to the Confirmation teacher who has a

student who seems to have difficulty understanding the material.

Some of the helps included in this guide are:

- Keep students who are easily distracted close to the teacher.
- Use non-competitive games for review and reinforcement of the lesson.
- Allow the student to say memory work privately to the teacher instead of in front of the class.

(If you have similar concerns about a child in your Sunday school class, we can help you, too.)

For your free guide, call or write: Lutheran Special Education Ministries; 6861 E. Nevada; Detroit, MI 48234; PH: 313-368-1220.

What's In A Name

Lutheran Special Education Ministries serves to enable children with special learning needs to receive a Christian education.

Throughout the years, just as our ministry has changed to meet different needs so, too, has our name. Here's a little timeline of all the name changes throughout our 125-year history.

1873 - German Evangelical Lutheran Orphan's Assistance Society

1893 - The German Evangelical Lutheran Deaf Mute Institution

1925 - The Evangelical Lutheran Deaf Mute Institute

1940 - Lutheran Institute for the Deaf

1957 - Lutheran School for the Deaf

1988 - Lutheran School for the Deaf Special Education Ministries

1990 - Lutheran Special Education Ministries

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Writer: Sandra Eggers
Editor: Sandra Eggers
Communications Coordinator

Managing Editor:

Roger DeMeyere
President/CEO

Send all communication regarding the editing, and ALL ADDRESS CHANGES to the address above.



Around the Ministry

Illinois

by **Jim Krone, Director**
Illinois Programs

Lutheran Special Education Ministries, Illinois, is currently serving 35 Lutheran schools. This gives us an increase of 10 new programs for 1998.

We also have six new teachers.

They are: **Jeannene Barbor**, St. John, Wheaton and Concordia, Addison; **Michelle Bauer**, Bethlehem, Chicago; Luther High School East and St. Paul, Chicago Heights; St. Paul, Dorchester and Zion Evangelical, Chicago; **Jessica Connor**, St. John, LaGrange; **Ann Glahn**, Lutheran School Association, Decatur; **Nicole Piper**, Our Savior, Springfield; and **Karen Schoeben**, Concordia, Machesney Park.

Please keep us in your prayers, so that we may continue to do God's will, as we endeavor to serve children with special learning needs in Illinois.

Indiana

by **Valerie Hughes, Director**
Indiana Programs

Proverbs 16:3 says "Commit to the Lord whatever you do, and your plans will succeed."

By committing our plans to the Lord — through prayer — our plans can succeed.

Therefore, I pray we accomplish the following plans:

- Develop an active prayer chain among our Indiana staff.
- Learn cutting-edge strategies to meet the needs of the students we serve.
- Develop 1 Corinthians 12:4-6, the "Giftedness," in each of our students.
- Reach out to the families we serve in ministry through a parent newsletter.
- Build bridges with other LSEM staff in the nation to share resources.
- Educate each of our partnership

schools and churches about LSEM.

- Identify a person in our work, home and community life to financially support the ministry.
- Serve wholeheartedly!

Michigan

by **Kathy Krause, Director**
Michigan Programs

We are blessed that Michigan now has 29 partnership schools. We also have five new staff members and (at this writing) are still in need of two more.

We welcome with great joy:

Karyn Anspach, a relatively recent graduate of Eastern Michigan University, is placed full-time at St. Peter-Macomb. Karyn and her husband, Mike, have moved from Ypsilanti to be closer to her school. She is continuing her education in the field of learning disabilities.

Renate Paselk comes to us from teaching 4th grade in a sister Lutheran school and will split her time between St. John-Fraser and St. Peter-Macomb. Her husband Peter is a music director and her daughters attend Trinity-Utica.

Carolyn Frazier, also a graduate of Eastern is beginning a half-time program at Trinity in Monroe. She brings a strong spiritual focus to teaching. She and her husband, Eddie, reside in Monroe.

Haroldine Witto will start a new half-time program at Hosanna-Tabor in Redford and will complete the rest of her week seeing children in other neighboring consultant schools. Haroldine's husband, Lawrence, is the pastor at Hosanna-Tabor.

Cindy Lincoln returns to the LSEM fold after teaching in a first/second grade classroom for 10 years. Cindy and her husband, William, and two children are currently members at St. Thomas in Eastpointe.

New York

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

Autumn is a time of joy, accomplishments and growth, especially for our Lutheran school children.

For our new students, this autumn may be the first time they've enjoyed academic success. For our returning students, this autumn may be the first time they joyfully began a new school year because they remember their success last year. And for all our students, this autumn will bring them growth as Christians, as our LSEM teachers "serve to enable children with special learning needs to receive a Christian education."

They are teachers like **Eileen DiLauro**, **Elizabeth Munz**, **Lois Geary**, **Beth Blair**, **Karen Harker**, **Denise Abdale**, and **Rose Marie Sheridan** (who rejoins our faculty after a one-year absence) who lead these special students to academic success and who share with them Christ's Gospel.

Academic success and Christian growth — that is what we hope to accomplish with our kids this autumn, and for the rest of the school year. And we will accomplish it - by God's grace and through your continued prayerful support.

Ephphatha Center

by **Lisa Krenz, Resource Specialist**

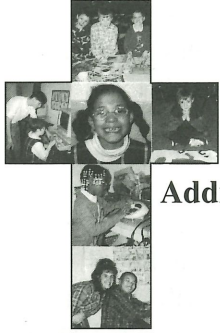
At the Ephphatha Center, we are getting many calls from pastors, lay teachers and parents, since fall is the time when the educational ministries of congregations begin again. Of course, we are thrilled to assist these servants of God in effectively sharing the Gospel message with students with special learning needs. This fall I also have the opportunity to present several workshops in Missouri, Nebraska, and Illinois.

We hope that the future brings many more opportunities to share information and encouragement with those so dedicated to bringing the precious message of the Gospel to all God's people.

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Lutheran Special Education Ministries
6861 E. Nevada
Detroit, MI 48234

Address corrections requested

“Beyond the 125th

(Continued from front page)

from 52 to 90 in four states in just two years? It's incredible!

Beyond Denominational Borders

With Jesus as the center, I believe that LSEM must reach out to all children with special learning needs, even to those children who are beyond the borders of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod.

Empowered by the strong Christ-centered theology of our Synod and its long history of providing excellent Christian education, we must serve those little ones struggling with special learning needs, both those within and without the Lutheran church. We must ask ourselves, “What would Jesus do?” Then do it.

Serving Those Who Serve

And finally, with Jesus as the center, LSEM will be a caring community that not only serves special needs' children, their families, schools and congregations, but also will serve those who serve. This is the *sine qua non* - the essential quality - of a Christ-centered ministry. How can we love the children without first, or at least concurrently, manifesting the love



of Christ internally? LSEM needs to continue to nurture the relationships of the ministry team and to improve upon our care and concern for their needs. They labor in the Lord's vineyards. And they are worthy! The vision for the LSEM of the future includes people who are drawn to or called to serve because they will experience the presence of Christ in each of us. And, like the

children, each of us will know Him better. How joy-filled LSEM will be!

I don't want this dream to end, but I need to get to work to help make it a reality. Think about these things. Give me your feedback. What is your vision? Perhaps you should spend some time just dreaming? It's inspirational! And fun.