



# The Advocate

*for Students with Special Learning Needs*

Spring 1998

FOUNDED 1873 • Formerly Lutheran School for the Deaf

Volume 67, Issue 2

*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 first installment.*

## Yesterday: 1873 - 1973

by Sandra Eggers

Shortly after the Civil War an epidemic took the lives of many Michigan parents, leaving their children orphans. Moved by Christian compassion, a group of dedicated Lutherans from several Detroit congregations met at Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church (now Historic Trinity) on February 17, 1873 to discuss establishing an orphanage. Under the chairmanship of Trinity's pastor, Rev. J. A. Huegli, the group formed "The German Evangelical Lutheran Orphan's Assistance Society."

One month later, the group elected Rev. Huegli as the first president of the first board of directors. Having formed an association of congregations, a mere two weeks later these Christians signed the first articles of incorporation for the society, on March 31, 1873.

The Association then called Rev. G. Speckhardt of Sebewaing, MI as the first superintendent. He accepted the call to serve as superintendent; however, he brought with him two deaf pupils, Margaretha Graaf and Margaretha Frisch, from Frankenmuth, MI.

His reputation as a teacher to the deaf grew and soon more deaf children came under his care.



It became apparent to Synodical President Rev. Dr. C.F. W. Walther and other synodical leaders that God had another plan. So at the 1874 Synodical Conference Convention in Pittsburgh, PA, the delegates unanimously resolved to suggest that the Detroit orphan's society serve the 17 deaf children exclusively and that the remaining 10 hearing orphans be moved to the LC-MS orphanage in Addison, IL. The society agreed and ministry to the deaf began.

So quickly did the deaf come that the newly-constructed building in Royal Oak was overcrowded within a few months. In August, 1874, the

*(Continued on back page)*

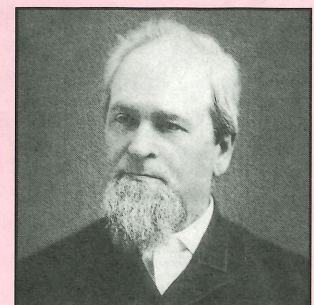
## A Personal Reflection on the Founding of Lutheran Special Education Ministries

by Rev. Dr. Albert G. Huegli

My grandfather, the Rev. John Adam Huegli, the founder of the Lutheran School for the Deaf in Detroit, was a man of vision and wide-ranging interests. His involvement in the education of deaf children was but one example of his concern for people and his zeal for the outreach of the Gospel.

*"On the occasion of the 125th anniversary of Lutheran Special Education Ministries, Rev. Huegli would surely have rejoiced to see the old and familiar story of the Gospel taught to children in new and exciting ways, especially to children who are 'angels of God with bruised wings.'"*

Although he died before I was born, I know something about his long and extensive ministry through my father, Dr. A.G. Huegli M.D., who was the 12th and youngest of the pastor's children.



*(Continued on page 2)*



## Ephphatha Award Nominations Deadline: April 15

The deadline for nominations for Lutheran Special Education Ministries' 1998 Ephphatha Award is April 15. This award is presented annually to a person who has exceptionally demonstrated Christian love in service to those with special learning needs.

To request a nomination form, call Lutheran Special Education Ministries at 313-368-1220.

## It's Our 125th Anniversary!

### NEW VIDEO

If you'd like to know more about us and the children we serve, ask for our free video, "One Child At A Time." It's approximately 15 minutes long and demonstrates through personal interviews of parents, teachers and students how our ministry serves children with special learning needs in Christian schools and in congregations.

### PERSONAL DEVOTION

A personal devotion created just for this occasion, *In Praise and Thanks to God for 125 Years of Blessings* reflects on God's grace and blessings during our 125 year history and looks with faith to the future, as we continue serving children with special learning needs. Written by Rev. Lawrence A. Kinne of Novi, MI.

### SPECIAL WORSHIP SERVICE

Written by board member Rev. Jon Reusch of Bloomfield Hills, MI, "125 Years of Serving One Child at a Time: A Service of Celebration," is available for the asking.

To request any of these items, just fill out the appropriate line on the enclosed envelope and mail it to us.

## "Operation SON-shine" Again Available

—Helps You Plan VBS for Kids with Special Learning Needs—

The national outreach arm of Lutheran Special Education Ministries, the Ephphatha Center, is again mounting "Operation SON-shine," a program that helps VBS planners and teachers reach children with special learning needs (also known as learning disabilities).

Through "Operation SON-shine," you'll be given a free "SON-shine Support," a help sheet providing

practical tips on how you as a volunteer VBS teacher can better teach these special children.

Act today to get your free "SON-shine Support." Call (313)368-1220; fax (313)368-0159 or write to: Lisa Krenz, Ephphatha Center Resource Specialist c/o The Ephphatha Center; Lutheran Special Education Ministries; 6861 East Nevada Ave; Detroit, MI 48234.

## A Personal Reflection

(continued from page 1)

Rev. Huegli had a remarkable commitment to the service of the Lord. He was not only the busy pastor of Trinity Lutheran Church, a thriving congregation in the heart of Detroit, but also he had time and the energy to establish more than a dozen other Lutheran parishes in the metropolitan area. His conviction about the importance of Christian education led him to organize a parish school at Trinity Church and branch schools at various other city locations. In 1872, the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Missouri, Ohio and other states (now the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod) elected him as President of its Northern District, which, theoretically, at least, extended from the Ohio River to northern Canada.

Thus it was no surprise that when the tragedy of the Civil War\* left behind a large number of orphaned children in Detroit uncared for, Rev Huegli provided a Christian home and school for them in a large dwelling next to Trinity Church. That building later became the parsonage housing the pastor's large family, including my father, and in due time was replaced by the present parish hall.

Since many of the orphans gathered together by Rev. Huegli were deaf - or seemed to be, because of language difficulties - special attention was focused on the instruction of the deaf. Under Pastor Huegli's leadership as president of the sponsoring association, this became the start of the Lutheran School for the Deaf,

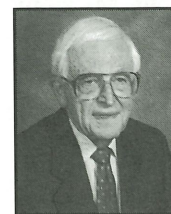
soon to be relocated to Nevada Avenue in what was then North Detroit.

My father, in his own 35-year practice of medicine, gave devoted service as school physician to the children. My brother, Dr. W. A. Huegli, MD, succeeded him in this capacity for about the same length of time, until his death. Since my own career was spent away from Detroit, I had a more limited association with the School. I do remember, however, visiting the School on one occasion in the 1950s while I was Dean of what is now Concordia University, River Forest, IL. With the authorization of my faculty, I was to commend the School for his excellent service and to award an honorary degree to its longtime principal, John Klein.

With the changes that have come about in the teaching of the deaf, the School broadened its ministry. It now serves several thousand disadvantaged children in many different places.

On the occasion of the 125th anniversary of Lutheran Special Education Ministries, Rev. Huegli would surely have rejoiced to see the old and familiar story of the Gospel taught to children in new and exciting ways, especially to children who are "angels of God with bruised wings."

*\*Some chroniclers of history have attributed the orphaning of so many children to an epidemic that hit Detroit shortly after the Civil War.*



President Emeritus  
of Valparaiso  
University, the  
Rev. Dr. Albert G.  
Huegli.





# Around the Ministry

## Illinois

by **Jim Krone, Director**  
*Illinois Programs*

Our Illinois programs are now directly serving 110 enrolled students. These children all have individual plans that provide specific help and support for their special learning needs and consistently work with our special education teachers.

In addition to working with the 110 enrolled children, our teachers have also provided support to an additional 525 children. This may be accomplished through small group teaching; one-on-one assessment; observation; supporting the classroom teacher; or meeting with parents to help them provide support at home.

Although we thank God, we can serve many children in this ministry, numbers are not as important as individuals. Because God has given each one of us special gifts to use to His glory, we believe it's more important to focus on the strengths of one child at a time. By helping each child find his or her strengths, we enable each child to receive a Christian education and we give each child hope for a better future.

## Indiana

by **Valerie A. Hughes, Director**  
*Indiana Programs*

Indiana - It's not just for basketball anymore!

You heard it right. There's more to Indiana than basketball. Like helping kids with special learning needs. Like Lutheran Special Education Ministries of Indiana.

In just the five short months since we began serving Indiana, we're seeing how God is giving us priceless gifts, like providing a dedicated and creative teaching staff. Members of our staff have established programs such as the "Popcorn Club," an after-school tutoring/homework help session with popcorn; a multi-sensory reading program conducted for one school's entire staff; and in-school inservices teaching ways of modifying lessons.

Although these educational programs speak well of our teachers, their students, parents and colleagues have even more to say about them, in comments like: "She makes learning fun," "My son has learned so much from her," and "Don't think about moving her next year; we want her for even more time."

So Dana, Diana, Janet, Sarah and Teri — I thank you for all that you've done. It's evident that the Holy Spirit is dwelling within you to carry on the work of Jesus. And thank you to the 10 schools LSEM is privileged to serve.

## Michigan

by **Kathy Krause, Director**  
*Michigan Programs*

The cold chill of winter has not left us yet. But no matter the weather, within the hearts of the children served by this ministry there is always a warmth, the warmth of a loving, caring teacher who:

—Advocates for a child who doesn't seem to "measure up."

—Gives parents instructive hints to help them help their child memorize Bible verses at home.

—Takes the time after school hours to watch a volleyball or basketball game.

—Sends a letter or visits a child in the hospital.

—Keeps in touch with a child even after they've moved onto another school.

Yes, and even a teacher who gets angry when the student they support always gets the short end of the stick.

As you experience the warmth of sunshine on your face, remember the warmth of these strong Christian teachers of Lutheran Special Education Ministries.

## New York

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

We thank God for our dedicated teachers like:

**Lois Geary and Eileen DiLauro.** A teacher at Trinity Lutheran School in Hicksville, NY, told me that these two bring excellence to both

their students and fellow teachers.

**Beth Blair.** Two of her students at the Lutheran School of Flushing and Bayside in Flushing, NY, told me (and I quote) "She's the best."

**Karen Harker.** During parent's night at Holy Trinity Community School in Hollis, NY, one of the parents told me that thanks to Karen's help, her little girl has met with academic success for the first time in her school career.

**Kathy Burns.** At a recent meeting of Queens' Lutheran school principals, Kathy's principal at St. John Lutheran School in Glendale, NY said to another principal "We love our Kathy Burns; what a wonderful asset to our schools."

**Denise Abdale.** A mother of a freshman at Martin Luther High School of Maspeth, NY, called my office and said that her son will probably make the honor role, due to Denise's hard work.

**Elizabeth Munz.** Most of the teachers, parents and administrators of Emmanuel Lutheran School of Patchogue, NY, have told me that Elizabeth is a wonderful advocate for her students.

We thank God for all our teachers. May He continue to bless and strengthen them in their work serving children with special learning needs.

## Ephphatha Center

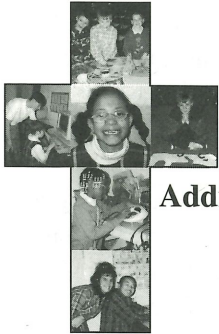
by **Kathy Krause, Director**

As we're celebrating 125 years of ministry to children with special needs, we've had a record number of contacts with pastors, teachers, and parents across our country. "Operation Confirmation" is in full swing; at times, we've received as many as 10 requests within one short day. Some requests are simple; volunteer teachers just want a copy of the "Adapting Curriculum and Instruction for Students With Special Learning Needs." But other requests are much more complicated; they are asking for specific information to help modify programs so that they can meet the needs of their special children, these gifts from God. Our Ephphatha Center Resource Specialist Lisa Krenz has certainly been working overtime to keep up with the flood of incoming inquiries. We thank God for her gifts and we thank God for the opportunity to serve so many children through this ministry.



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## Yesterday: 1873 - 1973

(continued from front page)

Association purchased 20 acres for \$5,000 from Col. Philetus W. Norris. They erected a new three-storey building, serving as both a school for the children and as a residence for the director.

However, by 1928, the old building did not meet city fire codes and was becoming crowded. The Association resolved to sell the property in North Detroit and authorized the board of directors to look for a new site.

Unfortunately, the Association could not raise enough money to purchase new property. There was no other choice but to remain in the current building for the time being.

The year 1930 saw the advent of the newsletter *The Deaf Child's Advocate*, a publication that helped promote the school, a task it still accomplishes today as *The Advocate for Students With Special Learning Needs*.

In 1933, principal John Klein became the director.

By February 1936, the association had built a new 35-pupil residence for girls on the North Detroit property.

By 1938, the student population increased to 74 students and it became apparent to the board of directors that something must be done. Either the Institute must stop recruiting more students or it must build. So they decided to build.

To raise the needed money, the Association began a capital campaign. Although in the midst of the Great Depression, yet always under God's grace, this campaign was successful. Donations came from around the Synod, from a school child's few pennies to General and Mrs. William S. Knudsen's gift of \$60,000, for the Gloria Dei Clara Elizabeth Knudsen Chapel. (Praise to God still resounds from this chapel today, as the students of Cornerstone Schools worship the Lord.)

On that Pentecost Day in 1940, more than 8,000 people thronged to 6861 E. Nevada to dedicate the complex to God and to hear Lutheran Hour Speaker Dr. Walter A. Maier deliver the sermon.

In 1957 the institute's name changed from "The Society of the Evangelical Lutheran Deaf Mute

Institute" to "Lutheran School for the Deaf."

Dr. John Klein retired in 1962 after serving this ministry for 54 years; Walter Bellhorn succeeded him.

Soon Lutheran School for the Deaf celebrated a century of God's grace and blessings. During this 1973 celebration, the centennial capital campaign raised \$1 million in funds to further support the school.

However, only two years after celebrating a century as a residential school, the Deaf School was about to drastically change.

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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 second installment.*

*In this issue, we'll explore what happened to change Lutheran School for the Deaf into Lutheran Special Education Ministries; we'll see again how God uses events to lead His people into a broader mission.*

## "Beyond Lutheran School for the Deaf"

by Sandra Eggers

The Lutheran School for the Deaf celebrated a century of God's grace and blessings. During the 1973 celebration, the centennial capital campaign raised \$1 million in funds to further support the school.

However, only two years later, the Deaf School was about to drastically change.

In 1975, President Gerald Ford signed into law a bill mandating that all school districts provide a "free and appropriate education" for all children, no matter their handicap. There was also a movement in education to mainstream handicapped children into the regular classroom. In addition, since fewer and fewer children were being born deaf because of advances in immunization, the school's enrollment dropped 61.4% from previous years, to 44 students. Through these challenges, God was again leading His people in another direction.

In 1976, Lutheran School for the Deaf opened enrollment to hearing children with learning disabilities



**LEFT:** Lutheran School for the Deaf, c. 1970.

Notice the large, box-like hearing aids. You can easily tell they are deaf.

**Below:** Lutheran Special Education Ministries, 1997. Students with special learning needs at St. Stephen's Lutheran School in Waterford, MI. Their special needs are hidden ones.

(also called "special learning needs.") By 1979, the school had begun its first satellite program for these children, at Holy Cross Lutheran School in Detroit.

Then in 1984 another first: in-school programs were expanded outside Michigan, into northern Illinois. Also that year the school expanded its help to congregations, by establishing a program called the Ephphatha Institute (now Ephphatha Center.)

While the ministry had changed, the name had not. So in May 1990, at the annual meeting of the Association of Congregations,



delegates voted to change the corporate name from "Lutheran School for the Deaf" to "Lutheran Special Education Ministries."

The next year the ministry  
*(Continued next page)*