

The Advocate

for Students with Special Learning Needs

Summer 2000 FOUNDED 1873 Volume 69, Issue 2

GRACE, GROWTH, GLORY

In the day-to-day struggles and schedules, it's easy to forget why we "serve to enable children with special learning needs to receive a Christian education." It's easy to become discouraged. It's easy to doubt. Even for our wonderful teachers. But every now and then, our Lord reminds us of why we do what we do. This is one of those times.

In one of the schools we serve in New York, there is a "self-contained" classroom. What this means is that the children who attend this class have specific learning difficulties and attention problems that need special support.

In many other ways these children are no different than any other child - or adult. Like most people, they struggle with

understanding abstract ideas like Jesus' death and resurrection. They struggle -- for the most part. Except on that one blessed day when the Holy Spirit revealed the truth to these kids, affirming their LSEM teacher in the process.



That one day in this classroom, right before Easter break, the teacher patiently explained to the children the true meaning of Easter, our Lord's death and resurrection.

When she finished the story, most of the children were celebrating this marvelous truth.

You could tell by their faces, smiles wide and eyes beaming. Most children, that is, except Jamahl.

Jamahl turned to a classmate sitting near him and coldly asked "Ah man, do you really believe that stuff?"

"Yeah," said the classmate. "'Cuz it's true."

"Hmmp," Jamahl snorted. "True? How'd you know," Jamahl said in that half-taunting, half-challenging way children have.

"I know," confidently proclaimed this

classmate, "because it's in the Bible."

I know because it's in the Bible.

With that simple testimony, Jamahl's LSEM classmate affirmed his teacher and confirmed this ministry's work. Such lovely encouragement is indeed God's gift.

Photos of Our Kids

The cute photos of our students you see throughout this *Advocate* were taken by Tom Treuter. Treuter is an accomplished Detroit-based photojournalist whose assignments have taken him around the world. However, he has always maintained a special place in his heart for children and willingly does work for non-profit clients at a low non-profit rate. We are fortunate to work with him.



New Director for Southwest Region Selected

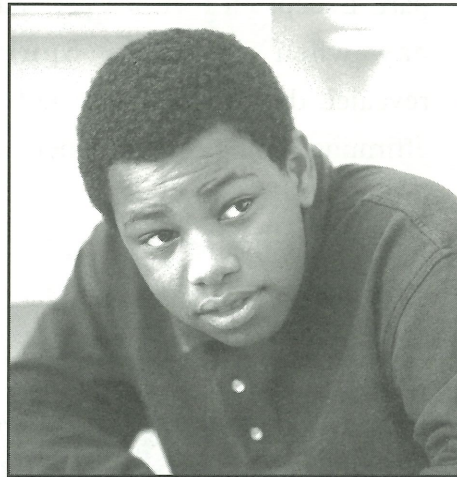
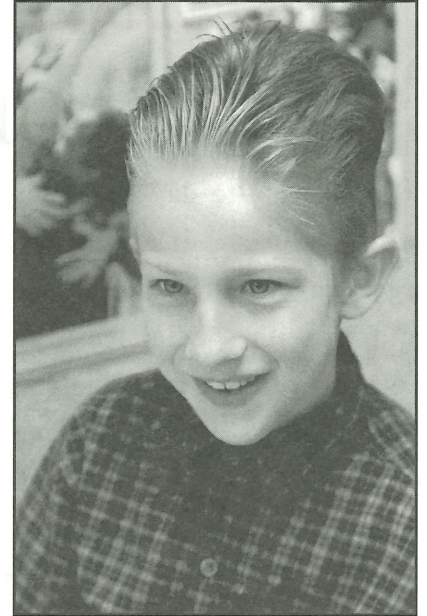
Laura Sauer is the new director of our programs in the Southwest Region, which includes her home state of California. She began her duties on April 3rd.

Sauer has 15 years' experience as an educator in Lutheran elementary schools in California.

In 1997, she achieved her Master of Science in Special Education from California Lutheran University.

In 1999, she received the "Elementary Teacher of the Year" award from the Pacific Southwest District of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod.

Sauer can be reached at the LSEM Southwest Region office at 6952 Van Nuys Blvd., Van Nuys, CA 91405. Phone: 818/988-7667.



Results of the Advocate Survey

Just thought you might like to know how the recent Advocate survey turned out.

Who Participated

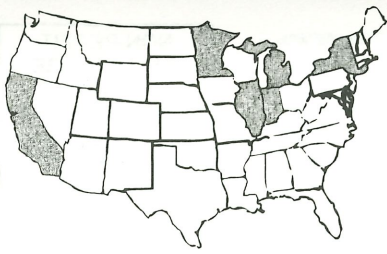
Of the 2,700 questionnaires sent out (1,350 each to both donors and non-donors), there were 163 people who returned them. Although 163 seems small when compared to 2,700, it is a 6.04% response rate which is considered good, as surveys go.

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Around the Ministry

Illinois

by *Jim Krone, Director*
Illinois Programs

When I count my blessings I can always count at least 20. These are our 20 teachers, such as Nicole Piper, Shawn Stewart and Sara Ruschmeyer.

Nicole Piper serves three schools each week.

At two of them she supervises volunteers and aides who work one-on-one with her students. In this way she still has time to help the classroom teacher with other students.

On the southside of Chicago where police sirens and gangs are commonplace, Shawn Stewart teaches at 4 schools.

Being a southside native enables Shawn to better help his students and their parents deal with special learning needs.

Sara Ruschmeyer is a resource room teacher in Yorkville, a new suburb of Chicago. Her colleagues, the regular room teachers, actively try to help Sara help as many children as they can.

Indiana

by *Valerie Hughes, Director*
Indiana Programs

Indiana programs will be saying goodbye to Lynn Gerke as she and her family relocate to Milwaukee.

Lynn came to us mid-year and has done a phenomenal job at St. John's, Monroeville. "You will be greatly missed, Lynn."

We feel blessed to be able to fill Lynn's position with the addition of Angela Goldey. Angela will join our staff beginning this fall. Welcome to LSEM, Angela!

The rest of our staff continue to amaze me with their dedication to their students,

families and the schools they serve.

As the year draws to a close, we are reminded of how each of us live under a perennial lack of rest. Matthew 11:28 tells us that rest comes through a relationship with Jesus. Psalm 83:10 reminds us that it is better to spend one day in his courts than a thousand elsewhere. I pray each of you will find daily devotional time.

Michigan

by *Kathy Krause, Director*
Michigan Programs

What a joy to be part of God's Kingdom during this time of year when the sun shines so brightly! Its light and warmth nurtures the plants and trees that surround us.

As our teachers take a well-deserved summer break, the administrative staff continues to search for new teaching candidates for our expanding programs. Currently, there is a national teacher shortage which, of course, affects our ministry. Please hold our teacher search in your prayers so that we can continue to develop programs to meet the needs of children who learn differently.

May the sunshine remind you of the Son who was given for us to light and warm our lives.

Minnesota

by *Dennis Senne, Director*
Minnesota Programs

Since I began my job with LSEM five months ago, I've spent the majority of my time and effort on "sowing seeds" and "establishing relationships." I've shared the LSEM message at 28 meetings and on 15 individual school visits. I've talked to 14 potential teachers; six are either interested now or for the future.

By God's grace, some of the seeds I've sown have already sprouted.

For example, one school is now a partner with us, requiring a full-time teacher for the fall. Other principals with whom I've talked are interested in partnering with LSEM in the future. One congregation has even named LSEM as their "Mission of the Month." The LWML-Minnesota South District has placed LSEM on their mission project ballot to be voted upon at their convention in July.

The Lord is opening many doors and blessing us, helping us reach out to His children with special learning needs.

New York

by *Paula Rosen, Director*
New York Programs

March and April were busy times for our teachers. Many state-mandated and standardized tests were given at this time of year. Our students need extra preparation and support which is given by their LSEM teachers.

We are very proud of our own Dawn Zinkowski who was nominated by the staff at Martin Luther High School as Lutheran Schools Association "Rookie of the Year." This is open to first- and second-year teachers. Dawn has been with LSEM since October 1998. She has done an outstanding job as the high school resource room teacher.

One of the students said to me "Mrs. Z., she's the best!" Dawn was honored at the Lutheran Schools Association annual dinner on May 24th.

Lois Dierlam and I presented a workshop to the administrators of the local Lutheran schools. We brought them up-to-date on the federal laws pertaining to children with special needs attending private schools and the work of Lutheran Special Education Ministries.

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LUTHERAN SPECIAL
EDUCATION MINISTRIES

Stepping Out in Faith

We're serving more children with special learning needs, both in current areas like Michigan, New York, Illinois, Indiana and new areas like California, Arizona and Minnesota. We're enabling them to receive a Christian education.

Truly a wonderful thing. But it can't happen without funds.

On the one hand, we're called to be good stewards of the funds that you, friends of our ministry, send us. So we don't just plunge into serving new areas without careful, thoughtful planning and stewardship.

On the other hand, since we are a faith-based ministry, we can't just say "We'll wait for the funds before we take a chance."

The solution? Carefully, prayerfully, we step out in faith. And God has affirmed this decision.

How? Well, at the annual meeting of our Association Congregations in May, they voted a 2000-01 budget of \$3.8 million, an increase of \$600,000 over last fiscal year's budget with a projected deficit of \$165,000.

Another way our Lord has affirmed our decision concerns last year's projected deficit of \$169,000 (a step of faith then, too.) Not only was it wiped out but we're ending the year with a surplus that will allow us to reach even more children. Imagine that!

By God's grace He has given us growth and to Him be the glory. Amen!

Now, in traditional Lutheran fashion, we can ask: "What does this mean?"

It means **THANK YOU!** Please join with us in giving God the glory. Please continue supporting this ministry with your prayers and your gifts. And then next year, God-willing, we'll have another glorious story to tell about God's grace, our growth and His glory. Amen.

*Results of the Advocate Survey
Continued from second page*

What You Said

Many of you liked the idea of having stories about our students, practical tips for parents, practical tips for Sunday School/Confirmation teachers and articles about our staff.

A Big "Thank You"

Thanks to all of you who participated in this survey; your comments will help us as we evaluate The Advocate, creating a publication that will better meet your needs.

*Around the Ministry
Continued from third page*

Ephphatha Center

*by Kathy Krause, Director
Ephphatha Center*

Summer brings a change in activities for most families and churches as well. As some families leave on vacation or have a more relaxed schedule at home, churches also change their pace.

Many congregations sponsor Vacation Bible School which is a wonderful opportunity- to minister to children and their families outside the scope of membership.

VBS is such a "hands-on" time to teach the beautiful Bible stories through songs, craft activities and service events. Children who might generally have difficulty understanding church concepts actually can experience the stories presented and have a greater understanding of God's plan for them.

Please let us know if we can help your congregation tell God's story to children who may not learn in a traditional manner.