

The Advocate

for Students with Special Learning Needs

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Reorganizing Our Regions to Reach and Teach More Students

Lutheran Special Education Ministries continues to benefit through God's grace. With His guidance, more programs have been placed into service and more students with special needs are receiving a Christian education. Statistics show that one student in 10 has a special learning need. In addition, 92 percent of all families who have children with special learning needs have no home church. As you can see, the need is great, and so is the potential to provide a Christian education to these children.

As we at Lutheran Special Education Ministries look ahead, we are preparing for the future growth of our ministry to more sites across the United States.

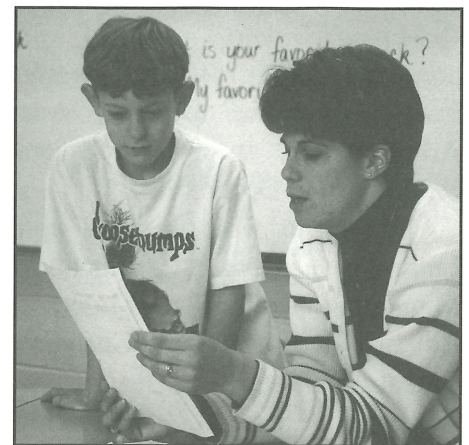


Rachel attends school at Concordia Lutheran School in Ft. Wayne, Ind.

With that continued expansion in mind, Lutheran Special Education Ministries has grouped all existing programs into five newly named geographic regions. This regional concept allows us greater flexibility in establishing programs over traditional state boundaries and gives our program leaders the combined support of regional staff members.

The Great Lakes Region, under the direction of Kathy Krause, continues to serve programs in Michigan and Indiana. Interim Director Susan Lewis currently is serving the Midwest Region, which has programs in Illinois. Our Northeast Region continues to add programs in the New York area with Paula Rosen as the director. Dennis Senne is the director of our Northcentral Region, which currently serves schools in Minnesota. Our newest area is the Southwest Region, where Laura Sauer is the director and currently oversees programs in Arizona and California.

Under the direction of these dedicated professionals, our Lutheran Special Education Ministries teachers reach and teach more than 2,500 students on a daily basis. God continues to bless



Josh, a student at Concordia Lutheran School in Ft. Wayne, Ind., receives a little help from his Lutheran Special Education Ministries teacher, Dana Hardy.

our ministry as we work in His kingdom to provide a Christian education for children with special needs. What a joy it is to know that, through growth, we are able to share the love of our Lord and Savior to more special students every year.



Hollianne, the proud author of "Vanilla and Me," is a student at Wyneken Lutheran School in Decatur, Ind.

Roger DeMeyere Honored by Concordia College



Lutheran Special Education Ministries rejoices with President and Chief Executive Officer Roger DeMeyere, who received an honorary doctor of laws degree from Concordia College, Ann Arbor, Mich., at commencement ceremonies in December.

DeMeyere, who has been with Lutheran Special Education Ministries since 1987, was honored for his dedication to Christian education. Under his leadership, Lutheran Special Education Ministries programs have expanded to several new states, so that thousands of children with special learning needs now are receiving a Christian education.

Around the Ministry

Great Lakes Region by Kathy Krause, Director

As the snow swirls around us in the Great Lakes Region, so do the blessings of the Lord. All of our programs continue to see growth in the number of children at each partnership school. Many of our school programs in Michigan and Indiana are at capacity, and waiting lists have been established. It is most difficult to tell parents that their child would benefit from our services, but cannot be seen by us because of time and/or space constraints. Principals in these partnership schools are aware of the challenges and are looking into expanding service time in the future.

Both states have solid teaching staffs and were blessed with some new, strong additions at the beginning of the school year. In Indiana, we welcomed Angi Goldie to the staff. New staff members in Michigan: Jeanie Branch, Amy Carrier, Judith Enders, Shari Hohnstadt, Cathy Huebner and Lori Newton.

As we returned from the Christmas break, two new teachers became part of our ministry in Michigan. Leslie Kreissler is a December graduate of Concordia University in Seward, Neb.

She was part of the ministry last year as a student teacher and is working with the students at Peace-Shelby. Jennifer Bilbrey is a December graduate of Concordia College, Ann Arbor, Mich. Jennifer grew up at St. Peter - Macomb, where she still is a member, and will be taking over the teaching duties at St. John - Fraser.

Each of our new teachers brings with her a strong commitment to Christian education and a visible joy in her Savior.

Another exciting addition to the Great Lakes staff is Merl Terry, regional development counselor. Merl will assist our region by maintaining communication with our many donors, renewing grant commitments and securing new areas of funding. Trying to keep up with his activities is a real challenge.

Valerie Hughes (Indiana coordinator) gave birth to Nolan Terrance late last summer and has chosen to reduce her work schedule in order to spend more time with Nolan and his big sister, Gillian. She will continue to handle the day-to-day contacts with Indiana teachers and schools.

As the cold wind blows here in the Great Lakes Region, we know that we can "snuggle" in the warmth of our Savior's arms.



Parishioners' Gifts Bring Joy to Classrooms

They brought storybooks, pens and flashcards. Bags brimmed with notebooks, crayons and pencils. Members of Christ Our Savior Lutheran Church in Livonia, Mich., turned their Advent by Candlelight celebration into an evening of sharing, and Lutheran Special Education Ministries is thankful for their support.

Several hundred participants attended the Advent event and brought donations of teaching and learning supplies - more than 1,200 items in all. The supplies

now are being used in classrooms throughout all five Lutheran Special Education Ministries regions. Teachers and students are thankful for the kind and generous

support of the people at Christ Our Savior.



Bobbie Lacier (left) and Sue Martz (right) coordinated the Christ Our Savior project.



At Zion Lutheran School in Cologne, Minn., students Amber and Von work with their Lutheran Special Education Ministries teacher, Donna Stole, using some of the classroom supplies donated by members of Christ Our Savior Lutheran Church.



Northeast Region

by Paula Rosen, Director

The new school year began with pressed new uniforms, smiling teachers and students, and two new staff members. Nicole Dupré is our new teacher in the self-contained classroom at Holy Trinity Community School. Kristen Dolan divides her time between Immanuel Lutheran and Redeemer Lutheran schools.

Our high school teacher, Dawn Zinkowski, and her husband, Charles, have welcomed a new baby, Tyler, to their family. Dawn has decided not to return to her position at Martin Luther High School for the remainder of the school year. She will be available to her replacement, Jennifer Petzold, as Jen gets to know the students at Martin Luther High. We are very happy that Jen has joined our ministry team.

Alison Roth now is the resource room teacher at Lutheran School of Flushing & Bayside four days a week. Lois Dierlam and Beth Blair are serving as area coordinators. In this position, Lois and Beth serve as mentors to new teachers, editors of the parent newsletter and workshop presenters.

We love to see the number of children we serve grow and we continue to revel in the success of the children we have served over many years. It is particularly gratifying to see the progress of the eighth graders and high school seniors who will graduate this year. We have served some for five or more years. Many students still come back to visit their resource room teachers after they have moved on to high school and college. Knowing that they have developed a relationship with their Lord keeps our spirits soaring.

Midwest Region

by Susan Lewis, Interim Director

So far, this has been a school year of blessings and challenges.

Three schools in the Northern Illinois District have added our services to their academic programs. Welcome to

St. John Lutheran School in Lansing; St. Paul Lutheran School in Skokie; and Zion Lutheran School in Marengo. In addition to these new schools signing on with our ministry, returning schools have requested increased programs. To date, our 24 dedicated teachers are serving nearly 1,000 students in 40 schools throughout the Northern and Central Illinois districts.

What a blessing - more children with special learning needs being served.

With the increase in programs comes the challenge of locating staff to support the services requested. Eight new teachers joined our staff at the beginning of the school year. They are: Camille Gilbert, Teri Gutow, Patricia House, Joycelyn Jones, Julie Kinninger, Arlene Lapsansky, Christine Salemi-Kim and Joselito Seldera. After the Christmas break, Jessica Dawson, a December graduate of Concordia University in Seward, Neb., joined our ministry as the teacher at Cross - Yorkville, and St. Paul's - Aurora.

Jennifer Bower has been nominated by one of the schools she serves as a candidate for the Timothy Award. This award is presented to one outstanding, first-year teacher in the Northern Illinois District. Even though we do not know the outcome, we feel blessed having Jennifer on our teaching staff.

The Lord certainly has blessed us richly with teachers. Please keep us in your prayers as we continue to search for the teachers we need. We have been blessed with the addition of a secretary, Angela Dear. We thank God for all that He has provided, and ask that you pray with us for His continued support to our ministry and the lives that we touch in His name.

Northcentral District

by Dennis Senne, Director

We started the school year with wonderful weather and many blessings for the beginning of Lutheran Special Education Ministries classes in Minnesota. We have joined in partnership with two schools. Trinity First Lutheran School in Minneapolis has Michelle Melde as a fulltime teacher. Donna Stole is serving as a part-time teacher at Zion Lutheran School in Cologne.

The school year started very smoothly at both schools. Both church

communities are very receptive and, as a result of this cooperation, nearly 40 students are receiving support. The classroom teachers and parents of the students also are receiving assistance. It truly is a blessing to observe the students receiving guidance with their skill development. More importantly, it is a blessing to realize they are sharing in the joy and peace of knowing their Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Three new schools have initiated discussions about possible partnerships with us in the future, and we continue to share the message of our ministry with principals, parent-teacher groups and college students.

We have been blessed with a grant from the Lutheran Women's Missionary League. Gifts were received from the St. Michael's Mission-A-Month program and an offering taken at the Fall Educators' Conference.

The Minnesota North District has decided to form a partnership with Lutheran Special Education Ministries.

God's grace continues to flow in abundance.

Southwest Region

by Laura Sauer, Director

In November our ministry gave an in-service presentation to teachers at First Lutheran - Northridge. The presentation included descriptions of learning disabilities and possible adaptations that can be made in the classroom. We also presented workshops for teachers and administrators at the Lutheran Educators' Conference of the Pacific Southwest District - LCMS and the Lutheran Schools of Southern California and Hawaii — ELCA.

Plans are progressing on our work with principals in the Phoenix area to begin service there in September 2001.

Welcome to our newest teacher/consultant, Jean Renta. She joins Stephanie Peterson and Sara Morgan, our other Lutheran Special Education Ministries teachers. Jean is teaching at Canoga Park Lutheran and is continuing her education at California Lutheran University, Thousand Oaks, a consortium partner.

We continue to meet with churches and individuals to spread the good news of the blessings God is showering on the Southwest Region.

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

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Blessings Received from Our Matching Gift Partners

Lutheran Special Education Ministries is blessed to have among its supporters two very important organizations - Aid Association for Lutherans (AAL) and Lutheran Brotherhood (LB). These fraternal organizations and their members continue to provide solid financial support for our ministry through their matching gift programs.

For the calendar year 2000, Lutheran Special Education Ministries received nearly \$7,000 from AAL and nearly \$6,000 from LB in matching funds. We thank these two special organizations and we thank their members for supporting special

education in a Christian setting.

The programs are simple. AAL and LB members can make a personal contribution (\$25 minimum) to Lutheran Special Education Ministries, fill out a form, and the donation is matched (\$100 maximum). This gives our supporters the opportunity to double all or part of their gift - or, perhaps, even triple the amount if they are members of both AAL and LB. For information on how you can be a part of this program during 2001, please contact your AAL and/or LB representative.

M'm! M'm! Good Support

Cold winter weather is the perfect time for soup. After you've enjoyed a piping hot bowl of vegetable beef or tomato soup, please remember to save your Campbell Soup labels for Lutheran Special Education Ministries.

Donated labels help Lutheran Special Education Ministries obtain teacher and student supplies for use in the classroom. So when you're shopping for soup, please consider Campbell's, then save the labels and send them to Lutheran Special Education Ministries. We'll redeem them for much-needed classroom supplies, and you'll be blessed with the warm feeling that comes from helping others.

Help the Environment and Our Students

Don't throw away used personal computer ink jet cartridges. You can recycle them and benefit Lutheran Special Education Ministries at the same time.

The recycling company provides Lutheran Special Education Ministries with postage-paid bags. When your home computer's ink jet cartridge is empty, place it in the bag, seal it and drop it into a U.S. Mailbox.

Lutheran Special Education Ministries receives a fee from the recycling company after they have received the cartridge

We have found that this makes a great project for congregations or service organizations. If you would like to support our ministry through this project, please contact Lutheran Special Education Ministries to obtain the postage-paid bags.

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Lutheran Special Education Ministries
6861 E. Nevada
Detroit, MI 48234-2983
(313) 368-1220
E-mail: LSEM@luthsped.org

Send all communications regarding this publication and all address changes to the above address.