

The Advocate

"Enabling children with special learning needs to receive a Christian education since 1873."

Winter 2002

Lutheran Special Education Ministries

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The Work Varies: The Mission Is the Same

Lutheran Special Education Ministries programs across the country have a common goal: to provide special education classes for children in Christ-centered classrooms. But as we know, God creates each of His children with unique talents and needs. Every child who relies on Lutheran Special Education Ministries struggles to learn. And each child has different struggles.

Noel Gregory, a Lutheran Special Education Ministries teacher at East Bethlehem Lutheran School in Detroit, shares the story of Natalie, who spells "success" B-I-N-G-O.

"Most people spell it s-u-c-c-e-s-s, but Natalie is not most people," Gregory explains. "Natalie comes to the resource room to work on her reading, language and math skills."

One day, Natalie was working on a math activity about telling time. It was a Bingo game involving matching small cards with times written on them to another card showing the corresponding times on clock faces. No one else in the room was doing the same activity, so Natalie kept matching times and clock faces until she had covered the sheet.

"With the last space covered, Natalie said 'BINGO' in a very satisfied voice," Gregory recalls. "As we went over her matches most of them were correct. Natalie was very pleased. She had been



Noel Gregory works on math skills with Natalie.



Chicago-area Lutheran Special Education Ministries teacher Jennifer Green uses a Scrabble game to teach English as a second language to (from left) Saul, Emanuel and Chris.

working hard on that task, and to her that BINGO spelled SUCCESS."

Northcentral Region Director Dennis Senne shares a different kind of success story involving a Lutheran Special Education Ministries teacher in his region. This teacher shared the joy of Jesus' love and forgiveness with one of her students when his classroom behavior initiated the discussion.

"Nearly three weeks later," Senne says, "the student returned to his teacher with the following question: 'Is it correct that Jesus will forgive me of anything I have done wrong, and is it true that I do not have to earn this?'"

The teacher went on to reassure him that this was true, as long as he believed in Jesus and asked for forgiveness. Then the student asked, "No matter what you have done?" He was relieved to hear the message of forgiveness again and then he went back to completing his school work.

"Later on that day, while the students were on the playground, the student again approached his teacher. This time he shared the information that his dad had done some really bad things," Senne

explains. "He wanted to know if his father could also receive the same forgiveness from Jesus. He was very pleased to hear the "good news" that his father could receive the forgiveness of Jesus."

Lutheran Special Education Ministries makes a difference in the lives of children. Students with special learning needs receive the tools they need to help them learn reading, math and other subjects; and because our classrooms are Christ-centered, our students also learn about the love and forgiveness of Jesus. A wonderful combination.



Lutheran Special Education Ministries teacher Joselito Seldera helps Erik complete a test.

Ken Heinitz – a Valued Volunteer



Ken Heinitz, pastor, Ph.D. and retired professor, is very humble about his volunteer work for Lutheran Special Education Ministries at the Midwest Region office in Illinois. Talk to him about it and he's more interested in giving credit to the ministry's office staff and the teachers who work with special education students.

"The entire staff does a wonderful job," he says. "This is a very important ministry and much needed. The teachers are wonderful. They give a great deal to the students they serve."

After his 1993 retirement from Concordia University at River Forest, Ill., Heinitz might have chosen to spend his days visiting his children and grandchildren or reading, his favorite pastime. Instead he chose to fill a portion of his time in service to others. In addition to his work with Lutheran Special Education Ministries, he is a volunteer board member for his

condominium association and helps out at a community thrift shop. Heinitz also accepts requests to preach at Lutheran churches in the Chicago area.

According to Midwest Region Director Susan Lewis, this faithful volunteer's weekly work plays an integral part in the smooth operation of Lutheran Special Education Ministries programs.

One morning each week, Heinitz arrives at the ministry's office on the Concordia campus and sets about his tasks. "I do pretty much whatever jobs they have for me – whatever is needed," Heinitz explains. "My main job is keeping track of books and other teaching materials that are borrowed from our library by Lutheran Special Education Ministries teachers for use in their classes."

Working in a small area of the office, surrounded by tall shelves of library books and special education teaching aids, Heinitz tracks materials using a computer program. He also catalogs new materials purchased by or donated to the ministry.

"In addition to helping out a wonderful ministry, this is a good way for me to maintain contact with the college," says Heinitz, who taught theology at Concordia for 36 years. "I enjoy keeping up with events on campus, seeing old friends and meeting new students."

"Dr. Heinitz is a Godsend to our ministry," says Lewis. "His work is a

wonderful contribution, but that's not the only reason he is an important member of our Lutheran Special Education Ministries family. Everyone on the staff values his friendship. He's a fine Christian role model, and a real blessing to us."

Remembering Debbie Mankiewicz



Her oversized coffee mug, decorated with a bright green Christmas tree and yellow stars, sat inconspicuously on the shelf in her classroom. It was washed and ready to be used when Debbie

Mankiewicz returned to the resource room and her beloved special education students. Another teacher was there to teach on this particular day, when one student brought the mug to everyone's attention. "When I see that coffee cup," the student said quietly, "I feel so sad about Mrs. Mankiewicz."

Midwest Region Teacher/Consultant Deborah Jean Mankiewicz was called home to Jesus on Nov. 20, two days after her 37th birthday. She had waged a long and courageous battle with cancer.

While we rejoice to know that she is safe in the arms of our loving Savior, those members of the Lutheran Special Education Ministries family who knew Debbie will miss her deeply. She is remembered for her engaging personality, her love for children, and her strong faith in her Lord Jesus.

Debbie joined Lutheran Special Education Ministries as a teacher/consultant in 1996. During her five years with the ministry, she served as a teacher at Jehovah and Bethel Lutheran schools in Chicago; St. John Lutheran School in LaGrange, Ill.; and St. John Lutheran School in Forest Park, Ill.

Among Debbie's survivors are her husband, Robert; two children, Joshua and Lydia; her mother, Jean Voss; and two brothers, Stephen and David.

Do You Have Time to Volunteer?

Whether it's stuffing envelopes, bundling Campbell's soup labels, or listening to a child read in the classroom, the work of Lutheran Special Education Ministries is made lighter with help from dedicated volunteers.

The needs of each region vary, but if you have time and talents to offer, please contact one of the following Lutherans Special Education Ministries directors: Kathy Krause,

Great Lakes Region (Michigan, Indiana), 313-368-1220; Susan Lewis, Midwest Region (Illinois), 708-209-3344; Paula Rosen, Northeast Region, (New York), 914-395-4710; Dennis Senne, Northcentral Region (Minnesota), 651-603-6235; Laura Sauer, Southwest Region (California, Arizona), 818-988-7667; and Jim Krone, Resource Center, Detroit. 313-368-1220.

Around the Ministry

Great Lakes Region

By Kathy Krause, Director

Winter arrived late in the Great Lakes Region. Never fear, it always arrives!

Never fear (fear not or do not be afraid)... a well-used phrase. Did you know this is the most used phrase in the Bible? Throughout the 66 books of the Bible, the Lord uses this phrase most frequently.

My clearest points of reference are found in the New Testament surrounding the Christ-child's birth: the messages to Mary about her pregnancy; to Joseph about taking Mary as his wife; the angels' announcement to the shepherds.

How often we use that phrase. There are T-shirts with "No Fear" printed on them.

But... fear is a part of our everyday life. We worry about the price of goods and materials, the road conditions when we travel, whether the kids did their homework, their grades, elderly parents, we even worry about gas mileage. Here at the ministry we worry about finances, donations, and finding good, quality teachers. All real concerns.

We must place our fears and worries where they belong... in the arms of a loving God who says, "Fear Not." Won't you help us with that? Pray for the ministry, asking God to continue to sustain us with strong finances, loving supporters and a dedicated staff.

We welcome four student teachers from Concordia-Seward: Brandi Smith (Colorado), Emily Martens (Illinois), Sarah Lucht (Iowa), and Michelle Chunn (Tennessee). We pray for their safe travel and solid experiences in our special education resource rooms. Fear not, the future of our Lutheran schools is in the capable hands of future teachers such as these our young ladies.

Midwest Region

By Susan Lewis, Director

Outside we may be experiencing cold and gloomy weather in the Midwest Region. Inside our classrooms we see the smiling faces of students basking in the warmth of Jesus' undying love for them. What a good place to be – enabling students to learn about their Savior, while working hard on their academic goals!

Goals—we all have them. They are a part of the everyday language when working with children with special learning needs. We keep ourselves busy following up on established



goals—this school year the Midwest Region has increased the number of children served by more than 14 percent over the same time last year. This means that more students with unique needs can remain in the Christian setting their parents have chosen for them. This allows them to continue learning about Jesus while having their special needs met by caring teachers. We praise and thank God for the opportunity to serve Him in this way.

Thank you to everyone who participated in our designated shopping days for Dominick's and Jewel Food Stores during the month of December. Be on the lookout for our upcoming designated shopping days during the months of March and May.

Please continue to keep us in your prayers as we strive to meet the goals

that have been established for this school year in the firm foundation of Jesus, our Rock.

Northeast Region

By Paula Rosen, Director

We still are recovering from the tragic events of Sept. 11. At last count, about 50 local Lutheran school students lost parents in the attacks. Many teachers lost siblings and other close relatives. God has been good to us. So many resources were offered to Lutheran schools in the way of counselors, prayers, visitors, gifts of toys and school supplies for children, money, and so much love! It's

overwhelming. For all those who hold us in your hearts and prayers, thank you and God bless you.

We keep growing in New York.

We now have 10 teachers serving nine Lutheran partnership schools in the New York metro area. One addition to our faculty is Joanne Motto, who is the on-site consultant teacher at St. Mark's Lutheran School in Yonkers, our newest partnership school. Sarah Feldman joined the Lutheran Special Education Ministries New York faculty in November. Sarah is our full-time teacher at Lutheran School of Flushing & Bayside.

Angela Lukas' SCIL class at Holy Trinity Community School participated in the Scholastic Books Club "Classrooms Care" project. The children read 100 books, which they documented. As a result, books will be donated to needy children. Their next project involves making a quilt that will be donated to children who are seriously ill or traumatized.

The big news at Martin Luther High School is plans for a new classroom for the resource room. Jennifer Petzold, the teacher, is busy helping to design and plan the new room. By the fall of 2002, the high school students will learn in a beautiful new environment

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Around the Ministry continued

Northcentral Region

By Dennis Senne, Director

Just before Christmas break, there was an opportunity to visit each of our four school sites in one day. This was a meaningful reminder of what we are about: "Whoever receives one such child in My name receives ME." (Matthew . 18:5) The students were focused, busy and full of energy. The teachers were effective and enthusiastic in their efforts.

At this time of year, the partnership schools and Lutheran Special Education Ministries review their agreements for next year. All of our schools plan to continue with the same level of service, and one is considering increasing its program. Mayer Luther High School has expressed an interest in beginning a program.

A grant of \$10,000 was received from Lutheran Brotherhood to provide a summer workshop for classroom and special education teachers. We have started, in cooperation with Concordia University/St. Paul, to plan the workshop for 25 teachers during the summer of 2003. The focus will be on how to make accommodations in the Christian classroom for students with special learning needs.

As we continue implementing the Lutheran Special Education Ministries program, we daily experience His challenges and His blessings.

Southwest Region

By Laura Sauer, Director

God meets us not only in history, but in our daily lives and through the students we serve. 2002 finds two dedicated teachers and one director teaching in five of our seven partnership schools. More than 50 students are receiving direct teaching services on a daily or semiweekly basis, and 14 other students received consulting services.

In November, Lutheran Special Education Ministries participated in the Southwest Lutheran Educators' Conference and presented two workshops on attention and focus to more than 150 educators. Educators from California, Hawaii, Nevada and Arizona visited our booth.

In February, our teachers will attend the California Association of Resource Specialists Convention to gain more knowledge about working with special needs children and to meet resource teachers from all over the state.

As the year continues, we are thankful for the growing ink jet cartridge recycling program, Campbell's soup label collections, and school chapel donations. Many challenges also face us such as finding dedicated teachers and funding our programs, but how comforting it is to hear Jesus' words in Matthew 14:27: "Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid!"



Lutheran School for the Deaf Memories

This 1951 photograph

accompanied an article in the last Advocate inviting our alumni to keep in touch. One of the team members pictured, Joyce Rossow Williams, identified the players and their home states with the help of teammate Roberta Clawson Worrell.

Standing (from left): Rose Marie Bier Labby, Michigan; Eileen Snyder Gore, Ohio; Roberta Clawson Worrell, Michigan; Grace Mielander Simsa, Ohio; Estelle Provow, Washington; and Margaret Gaye Haigler Rogers, Alabama. Kneeling (from left): Marylou Laford Miller, Michigan; Margaret Hopf Steele, Canada; Joyce Rossow Williams, Michigan; Geraldine Smith Greer, Mississippi; Judith Johnson Griffin, Texas; and Rosella Burgess, California.

"Our team played against seven Lutheran schools with hearing teams," Williams recalls. "We never lost any games, and won the first championship. We were very proud." Williams lives in Roseville, Mich., and has a son; twin daughters; four granddaughters; three grandsons; a stepdaughter; a stepson; five step grandchildren; and three step great-grandchildren.

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