

The Advocate

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

Spring-Summer 2002

Lutheran Special Education Ministries

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Agreement Establishes New Southcentral Region

Representatives of Lutheran Special Education Ministries, Concordia University at Austin, Texas (Concordia), and the Texas District, the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod (Texas District), signed a consortium agreement on April 30 to form a partnership that will bring special education programs to Lutheran schools in Texas. The agreement became effective May 1.

With this agreement in place, children across Texas who struggle to learn will have the opportunity to receive a Christian education along with special education assistance.

On hand to sign the agreement were: Roger DeMeyere, president and chief executive officer of Lutheran Special Education Ministries; Texas District President James Linderman; and Robert Greene, interim president of Concordia.

The consortium agreement calls for Lutheran Special Education Ministries to provide special education programs and



Signing the Southcentral Region consortium agreement are (from left): Roger DeMeyere, Lutheran Special Education Ministries; James Linderman, Texas District of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod; and Robert Greene, Concordia University at Austin.

services to Lutheran schools and congregations throughout the Texas District.

This partnership establishes the ministry's Southcentral Region, its sixth regional office. The other offices are located in Detroit, Mich. (Great Lakes Region); River Forest, Ill. (Midwest Region); Bronxville, N.Y. (Northeast Region); St. Paul, Minn. (Northcentral Region); and Van Nuys, Calif. (Southwest Region).

For its part in the consortium,

Concordia will provide space for the regional office. The Texas District will provide financial support and consultation regarding the establishment of Lutheran Special Education Ministries programs in Texas District Lutheran schools.

"What once was only a dream now is a reality," said DeMeyere. "I'm very excited about working in partnership with the Texas District and Concordia to open the doors of schools and congregations wider in ministry to serve children with special learning needs. To God be the glory!"

Real Life Lessons Learned at the Tiger Shop

Thanks to Lutheran Special Education Ministries teacher Michelle Melde and the help of some volunteers, students at Trinity First Lutheran School in Minneapolis, Minn., are learning some valuable lessons.

The Trinity First students enrolled in the Lutheran Special Education Ministries program operate the Tiger Shop. The store was established as an effort to support the school's total student Christian character development focus for the year.

Throughout each week, all students in the school earn tickets for accomplishing tasks such as coming to school prepared to participate in daily activities and having all homework assignments completed. On Friday afternoon, teachers

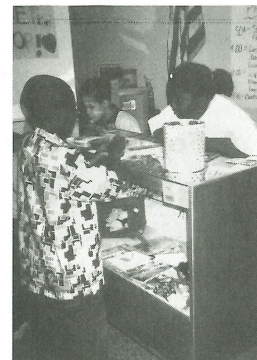
may bring their classes or individual students to the store to redeem their tickets for items such as games, books and school supplies. The Lutheran Special Education Ministries students have the responsibility of organizing and setting up the store each Friday. They also assist the students with shopping.

The Tiger Shop was made possible with the help of some willing adults. A women's Bible study group donated the supplies for the store and an adult Lutheran Special Education Ministries volunteer is in charge of managing the ticket record-keeping system.

The shop has been very popular with students and teachers at Trinity First. A teacher shared that the shop supports her efforts to help students learn the skills

needed to become more independent with their studies. Students are enthusiastic about shopping at the Tiger Shop, and some have said that earning the tickets has been an incentive to complete their homework.

As for the Lutheran Special Education Ministries students, Melde said the shop has given the students an opportunity to transfer some of the skills they have learned in the classroom to a real life situation.



Shopping day at Trinity First Lutheran School's Tiger Shop.

Our Teachers Share Successes



Su Stevenson, a Lutheran Special Education Ministries teacher, works with Matthew, a student at Ashburn Lutheran School in Chicago.

As another school year comes to a close, our teachers have shared success stories.

Here are a few of them. God's blessings are revealed through these children and their successes.

Margaret Ellenstein, Midwest Region

Susan's report card changed from years of mostly Ds and Fs to a report card she was proud to take home – As, Bs and Cs. The change occurred in one quarter when she was in sixth grade.

What made the difference? A Lutheran Special Education Ministries teacher worked with Susan, teaching her organization and study skills. Susan loved the attention she received, but most of all, she responded to the praise she deserved as she changed her study habits.

Angi Goldey, Great Lakes Region

Erick, a third grade student at St. John Lutheran School in Kendallville, Ind., wouldn't talk to many people except his closest friends. He had severe learning problems. Working intensely with Erick seemed to make the difference. Reading was very difficult for him. Learning to recognize letters and sound out words was a slow, steady process. By the end of the school year he could sound out words. But time was limited, as the school's Lutheran Special Education Ministries program was not a fulltime program.

The following school year, the principal increased the program to four full days a week. Erick has received more help; his self-esteem has skyrocketed; and he is starting to read on his own. He's even started reading chapter books.

God truly is working in marvelous ways through this program. The school should be commended for fulfilling its mission to help all children in their walk with Christ and in developing their academic skills.

Annie, a student at Concordia Academy High School in Roseville, Minn., finds joy in reading.



Judith Enders, Great Lakes Region

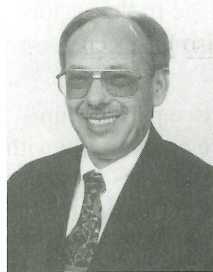
Billy is a third grader. He was shy, didn't volunteer, was unable to read or spell at the second grade level and had poor handwriting. After a year in a Lutheran Special Education Ministries resource room program at his school, he is confident; eager to volunteer answers; is reading one grade level higher; and reads books for fun. Even Billy's handwriting has improved.

His successes are a tribute to God, the Phonics First Orton-Gillingham method of teaching, the support of his regular classroom teachers and the assistance he received in the resource room.

Ministry Announces Three Appointments

Lutheran Special Education Ministries President and Chief Executive Officer Roger DeMeyere has announced the following administrative appointments:

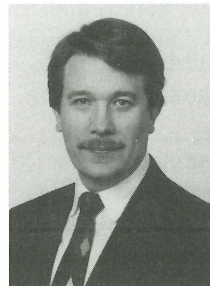
George Keil has been newly hired as vice president of resource development. In this newly created position he will focus on establishing and maintaining relationships with major donors nationwide. He also



will work closely with regional directors to enhance their resource development efforts. He is based at the ministry's National Office in Detroit.

He holds a bachelor's degree from Concordia University, River Forest, Ill. After teaching for one year at a Lutheran school, he embarked on a career in business, working for K-Mart Corporation and two small manufacturing companies before joining Lutheran Special Education Ministries.

Jim Krone, formerly resource center director, has been promoted to the newly created position of vice president, programs and services. His duties will include leadership in the development, implementation and management of special education programs and services.



Krone holds a bachelor's degree from Concordia University, River Forest, Ill., and a master's degree in special education from Northern Illinois University. He began his teaching career at St. Paul Lutheran School in Boca Raton, Fla. He joined Lutheran Special Education Ministries in 1986 as a resource teacher in the Chicago area and was named Midwest Region director in 1989. Krone was promoted to resource center director and was transferred to Detroit in 2000. He will continue to be based at the National Office in his new position.

Lois Dierlam has been promoted to Northeast Region director, succeeding Paula Rosen who will retire at the end of the 2001-02 school year. Dierlam has served Lutheran Special Education Ministries for the past seven years as a special education teacher in the Northeast Region.



She earned a bachelor's degree in special education from George Peabody College for Teachers in Nashville, Tenn., and a master's degree in special education from Hofstra University in Hempstead, N.Y.

She will be based in the Northeast Region office on the campus of Concordia College, in Bronxville, N.Y.

In announcing the appointments, DeMeyere said, "Please remember these individuals in your daily prayers, asking the Lord to bless their efforts."

Around the Ministry

Great Lakes Region

By Kathy Krause, Director

"Spiritual Success" is a story written by Shari Hohnstadt, resource room teacher at St. Peter-Macomb. One of her students came to speak to her about his faith. This was very much out of character for him, since he is a quiet young man.

"I don't know if you know it, but I haven't been baptized," he remarked. "I want to be baptized. People need to know what I believe in and I need to be baptized so that they can know. It is what God wants me to do. Nothing is for sure. I don't know where God will take me in life, but I want to be baptized." Unknown to him, Shari and other staff members had been praying regularly about this student and his family.

A week later, this young man shared this special occasion with his family, teachers and classmates. He was quite amazed when other teachers closed their classrooms so that their students could witness this miracle of faith. To God alone be the glory!

Midwest Region

By Susan Lewis, Director

It is an extremely busy time preparing for the many opportunities we have to spread the news about our work with children who have special learning needs. Our staff presented a program at the Lutheran Education Association Convocation in Minneapolis, Minn., and the Northern Illinois District Parish Nurses Roundtable in Yorkville. We also hosted a booth at the English District Lutheran Women's Missionary League Convention in Downers Grove, Ill., and at the Northern Illinois District's General Pastoral Conference in Rockford.

Our ink-jet recycling program reached an all-time high of more than \$250 in one month. Keep up the great work. John

Klucinskas, president of AAA Environmental, recently donated \$1,000, which is in addition to the monthly check we receive for your recycling efforts.

We have received gifts from many women's groups. To name a few, we thank: St. Matthew, Lake Zurich, Ill., \$1,000; Immanuel, Hillside, Ill., school supplies; and Holy Cross, Alsip, Ill., Campbell's Soup labels.

Northeast Region

By Paula Rosen, Director

Spring begins the beautiful renewal we experience in Jesus. The early arrival of spring heralded the growth of faith and flowers. Angela Lukas' class is busy putting the final touches on the quilts they are making for sick children. Nicole Dupre's students are excited about her new baby boy, Alexander. While she is out on maternity leave several of the talented



students in her class helped with the scenery for the spring show.

The New York teachers are busy corresponding with the people and congregations who give so generously to our ministry. The children enjoy sharing their stories as well.

Lois Dierlam and Paula Rosen exhibited our display at the Lutheran Women's Missionary League's Atlantic District convention in Albany.

Paula Rosen presented workshops at Queens Lutheran School and at the Lutheran Schools Association Early Childhood Conference, which takes place over a three-day period in three regions.

Northcentral Region

By Dennis Senne, Director

Spring in the Northcentral Region brings with it many new beginnings and provides time to acknowledge many blessings. As we approach the end of another school year we celebrate the

growth that all 78 of our students have made emotionally, socially, academically, physically and spiritually.

In April the original Northcentral Region consortium participants -- Lutheran Special Education Ministries, Concordia University - St. Paul, and the Minnesota South District - Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod -- renewed their commitment to help children with special learning needs for another three years. Present plans call for the new agreement to include two additional participants: the South Dakota and Minnesota North districts of the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod. Expansion of the partnership program continues with one school expanding, one new agreement completed, and one school intending to form a relationship with Lutheran Special Education Ministries.

During the "March Disability Awareness Month" emphasis on the Concordia University campus, our ministry and Bethesda Homes and Services conducted a chapel service, set up displays for a day, and organized a workshop for church workers titled "Teaching the Faith to Individuals with Disabilities."

Southwest Region

By Laura Sauer, Director

As the school year ends, we are especially thankful for our teachers, Ashley Steele and Stephanie Peterson. They are a blessing to our ministry here. Due to a teaching shortage in the region, Director Laura Sauer also has been teaching.

We are blessed with five partnership schools this year and we are working with more than 60 students. Three new schools have signed on for the 2002-03 school year. We are expanding our service to Phoenix, Ariz. We pray that we will find two or three more teachers for the new school year.

During Lutheran Schools week, First Lutheran School in Temple City, Calif., and Concordia Lutheran School in Cerritos, Calif., donated chapel offerings to Lutheran Special Education Ministries. Trinity in Whittier, Calif., continues to donate ink and laser jet cartridges and Campbell's Soup labels. We appreciate their support.



Susan Lewis accepts a check for \$1,000 from John Klucinskas, president of AAA Environmental

A Fond Farewell

Paula Rosen to Retire

Lutheran Special Education Ministries Northeast Region Director Paula Rosen will retire at the end of the 2001-02 school year. Rosen has been with the ministry for the past 11 years.



Rosen joined Lutheran Special Education Ministries in 1991 as the director of the then newly established

Northeast Region. Under her direction, the region has grown to serve more than 100 students in 10 partnership schools.

“Paula has been a very effective

ambassador for our ministry and for children with special learning needs over the years,” said Lutheran Special Education Ministries President and Chief Executive Officer Roger DeMeyere. “She started our New York program and made it what it is today. Paula has formed relationships with our partnership schools and has brought attention to the needs of special children through her work with the Lutheran Schools Association in New York as well as her work with national organizations.

“We are thankful for her many contributions to the ministry, and wish her God’s blessings as she enjoys a well-deserved retirement.”

Auxiliary Member Honored

The Lutheran Special Education Ministries Auxiliary for the Detroit area has honored Gertrude Reppenhagen as its woman of the year. She was honored along with 56 other women of the year at the Council of Lutheran Women luncheon held earlier this year in Livonia, Mich.

Each year the churches and service organizations that comprise the council choose a woman of the year to be honored at the celebration.

The honorees are selected for their volunteer service to the congregations and organizations they represent.

Reppenhagen was one of eight women representing intercongregational organizations this year.



Lutheran Special Education Ministries Auxiliary Woman of the Year Gertrude Reppenhagen is congratulated by President and Chief Executive Officer Roger DeMeyere.

Alumni Update

A Visit from Queen Laura



Laura Walker found familiar faces in a display of historical photographs during her visit to the Lutheran Special Education Ministries office.

Laura Walker, a student at Lutheran School for the Deaf from 1969 through 1975, recently visited the Lutheran Special Education Ministries staff while she was on vacation. A resident of Swan River, Manitoba, Canada, when she was a student, she now lives in Toronto, Ontario, Canada. Her last year as a resident at the school was an eventful one for Walker. In April of that year she was elected Circus Queen in connection with the students’ annual visit to the circus. Then in May she was confirmed.

During her visit Lutheran Special Education Ministries President and Chief Executive Officer Roger DeMeyere took her on a tour of the building, which has changed considerably since it was purchased by Cornerstone Schools several years ago. Walker was especially interested in the Lutheran Special Education Ministries offices, which are located in the former girls’ dormitory. The room where she lived as a student now is the office of Programs and Services Vice President Jim Krone.

Thank You, Campbell's Donors

A hearty thank you to all of our supporters who so generously contribute to our Campbell's Labels for Education project. Because so many of you saved your labels from Campbell's products and sent them to Lutheran Special Education Ministries, we were able to send 100,000 labels to the Campbell's company this year for much needed classroom supplies including: maps,

videos, Reading Blaster programs and calculators.

To everyone who sent labels, trimmed labels and packaged labels, thanks on behalf of our students. We hope you'll continue to take part in this effort. If you or your organization would like information about becoming involved in this project, please contact the National Office staff in Detroit.

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