

The Advocate

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

Winter 2003

Lutheran Special Education Ministries

Volume 72 Number 1

The Measure of Our Students' Success

The Lord has blessed Lutheran Special Education Ministries with many talented, caring Christian teachers to work with children who have special needs. Our ministry's mission statement says that we "serve to enable children with special learning needs to receive a Christian education." The successes seen in the classroom are a joy to teachers, students and parents. Here are a few success stories that have been submitted by the childrens' teachers.



Northcentral Region Teacher
Kathy Meier works with
Pauline, a ninth grade
student.

Galvani

Galvani is a fourth grader. He is a street smart boy with a big heart and a great smile who is very eager to learn. Due to circumstances beyond his control, he missed 56 school days in pre-kindergarten and 41 days in kindergarten. Two years ago, Galvani

was diagnosed with learning disabilities, but the Chicago public school he attended did not recommend special education services.

Galvani began his school career with quite a few challenges to overcome. "This wonderful child of God needed a chance to learn," said

his teacher, Lisa Kube, a Lutheran Special Education Ministries teacher in the Midwest Region.

He dreams of being able to read and buying his mother a brand new home some day. His parents, his regular classroom teacher and Kube have confidence in him and are trying to teach him to have confidence in himself. His absence record has improved since kindergarten, and both of his parents have been working with him at home. Now that he is receiving the help he needs, Galvani attends class ready to work and learn something new. He has learned to read many new words and has discovered that he likes math and learning on the computer.

Amanda

Amanda has succeeded in learning to read.

According to Carolyn Frasier, her Great Lakes Region teacher, Amanda is like most sixth graders. She enjoys listening to music, playing sports,

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www.luthsped.org

We're on the Web

Lutheran Special Education Ministries is on the World Wide Web. Now, people around the world will have computer access to up-to-date information about our programs and services by visiting the Web site at www.luthsped.org.

Visitors to the site will find information about our regional programs, the national Resource Center and the



people to contact for assistance.

In addition, there are sections about volunteer involvement, frequently asked questions, a history of the ministry and employment opportunities.

We invite you to visit the Lutheran Special Education Ministries home on the World Wide Web.

Success

Continued from page 1

having fun with friends, going to the mall, and participating in computer, art and gym classes.

When she was in third grade, she was having a difficult time learning to read. This caused problems in other subjects. Amanda's teacher was frustrated with her slow progress. The work was just too hard for her, and her mother spent hours trying to get her caught up. Everyone was struggling to help Amanda. Then Amanda was tested and placed in a Lutheran Special Education Ministries program. She has made wonderful progress since being there.

Amanda now is reading sixth grade books. She struggles with a few words, but she reads most of them. Knowing how to read has helped her



Shirley Holthus, a Lutheran Special Education Ministries volunteer in the Northcentral Region, listens to Matthew read. He is a seventh grader.

read books faster and take tests faster. She is able to understand words and has the courage to ask for help. Amanda has done a lot of hard work and has gained the confidence to keep trying. "Her future is in God's hands," said Frasier, "and I am sure that part of it will include reading."

Tom

Tom is a sixth grade student who used to go to public school. He's doing well now, and that is music to his parents' ears.

"At his prior school," said his Great Lakes Region Teacher Gail Vahlbusch, "Tom struggled in second, third and fourth grades. After many parent-

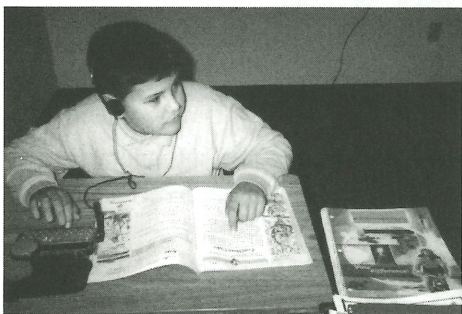
teacher conferences, Tom finally was tested, and the results showed that he was "not bad enough" to receive special help in his area of weakness, reading. Tom worked hard and was learning, but not at the same rate as his classmates.

"As time went on," Vahlbusch said, "he was further and further behind. As Tom got older, he became more aware of his weakness. He began to feel 'stupid.'"

Tom's parents looked for help, and were led to a school with a Lutheran Special Education Ministries program. He started attending the school with the usual fears of transferring to a new school, plus the fear that his new classmates would find out that he couldn't read.

Tom was tested again, and it was determined that he would benefit from special help in the Lutheran Special Education Ministries resource room.

"Tom has many strengths that he is using to overcome his weakness in reading," added Vahlbusch. "He continues to work hard. Both he and his parents are grateful for the help that he is receiving through Lutheran Special Education Ministries."



Adam, a student in the Great Lakes Region, works on his reading.

Teachers Helping Teachers Around the World

Some people might call it fate. Other people may call it a coincidence. But Midwest Region Director Susan Lewis says, "God certainly has a way about Him."

During the last school year, 11 teachers from the Midwest Region took part in the Lutheran Hour Ministries' Teacher-to-Teacher project. In addition to the teachers, Lewis' mother, Bernice Gray, participated by sewing the 17 tote bags that were used for the project.

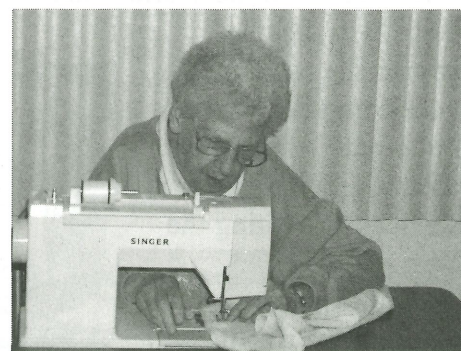
Teacher-to-Teacher asks North American teachers, volunteer teachers and those who support the teaching profession, to gather kits of teaching materials and supplies for distribution

to teachers all around the world. The Midwest teachers' kits were sent to teachers in Madagascar, and the headmaster at the Blind School in Ansirabe one of the Midwest Region's kits.

"I think it is interesting that a ministry working with individuals with special needs received one of our kits," Lewis said. "This is a way that our ministry is able to build an international relationship with another ministry."

In an e-mailed letter to Gray, Headmaster Erison Ernest Solohery, who also is the director of all of the Malagasy Lutheran Church's blind schools, wrote: "How thoughtful of

you to think of people you have never seen. Be the grace of God with you. I appreciated every item in the parcel. Thanks a lot."



Bernice Gray, mother of Midwest Region Director Susan Lewis, sews a tote bag to be used for the Teacher-to-Teacher project. The bags were filled with supplies collected by Midwest Region teachers and distributed to teachers in Madagascar.

Around the Ministry

Great Lakes Region

By Kathy A. Krause, Director

As the cold winds of winter blow in the Great Lakes Region, we are warmed by the glow of Jesus, the Light of the World.

Our hearts also are warmed by the accomplishments of the students served by our 40 partnership schools in Indiana and Michigan. What a joy to see the progress these children are making under the watchful eyes of our very special teachers.

We pray for safe travel, as Michigan will host two student teachers from Concordia-Seward from late February until early May. Melissa Rossow of Lakeland, Mo., will learn and work at Trinity-Utica under the supervision of Gail Vahlbusch and Patti Kuppe. Amy Ager of Colorado Springs, Colo., will be at St. Peter-Macomb with Karyn Anspach and Shari Hohnstadt. We are pleased to be instrumental in training new teachers for ministry.

Midwest Region

By Susan Lewis, Director

During December we launched the SERVE Project for Lutheran schools in Chicago. The Northern Illinois District-Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod, through its Urban Ministry Endowment Fund, is providing the means to train volunteers and teachers' aides in research-based techniques. Training takes place monthly, December through May, at three sites in the Chicago area.

These trained volunteers will provide additional support to students who are academically at risk. To date, nine schools are taking advantage of the training sessions by sending a total of 25 volunteer/teacher aides to the sessions. More schools would like to take advantage of the training, but they haven't been able to locate volunteers. Please keep the SERVE Project in your prayers.

We presented three sectionals at the Urban Teachers' Conference at Concordia University, River Forest, Ill., in February. They were: Adaptive Learning Preschool through Third Grade; Adaptive Learning Fourth Grade through Middle School; and Behavior Management. Our staff enjoyed interacting with the Chicago Lutheran educators attending the conference.

Northcentral Region

By Dennis Senne, Director

A third grader involved in the Lutheran Special Education Ministries program at Trinity First in Minneapolis was baptized recently. Our region has programs in six schools serving 112 students. HE continues to bless HIS kingdom.

Thrivent Financial, in cooperation with Concordia University-St. Paul, is making it possible for 45 Lutheran schoolteachers to attend a three-day workshop on inclusion and reading in June at the Concordia campus.

The Regional Support Council continues to be active in its efforts to advance the special education ministry. Goals are being established in the areas of financial resources, program expansion, school partnership growth, congregational

came to see the new facilities.

Our partnership programs are running smoothly, and the teachers are trying many new and innovative techniques to help teach our special children. The teachers attended a full-day workshop on new writing and math programs for their classrooms.

Jennifer Petzold, our teacher at Martin Luther High School, received her master's degree in special education.

Workshops have been presented to Lutheran school faculties. Topics included: what Lutheran Special Education Ministries is all about; what it is like to be learning disabled; the writing process; and evaluations for students who are struggling.

With God's help, we will continue to serve the children who need us.



Southcentral Region

By Gayle Grotjan, Director

The Southcentral Region is open! Zion Lutheran School and Church in Dallas, Texas, are providing office space and office support gratis in support of the ministry in the Southcentral Region.

Director Gayle Grotjan, has relocated to the Dallas area and has begun working with Bill Hinz, education executive for the Texas District, Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod, to develop programs in the region. We also have made presentations at the six regional meetings held by administrators in Lutheran schools in the Texas District. The purpose of the presentations was to acquaint the administrators with Lutheran Special Education Ministries and begin discussing developing partnerships with the school personnel to enable them to serve students with special needs. There is much excitement and enthusiasm for serving in this joint ministry.

Gayle Grotjan was the speaker for the Dallas Metroplex Lutheran Teachers' in-service in January. The topic was "Learning Disabilities: The Who, What, and How." She also is a representative of the Dallas Metroplex administrators to the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod, Texas District Lutheran Schools Accreditation Commission.

awareness/involvement, and building general support for the Lutheran Special Education Ministries program.

We continue to receive questions regarding modified confirmation curriculum. An opportunity was provided in the fall to meet with all of the pastor circuit counselors, and that will result in Lutheran Special Education Ministries attending each of the circuit meetings.

We are making regular contacts with non-partnership schools, including chapel talks. We also have been in touch with the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod North Dakota and Wisconsin North districts regarding the Northcentral Consortium Agreement.

Northeast Region

By Lois Dierlam, Director

Greetings from the cold Northeast. The busy fall has turned into a busy winter. In November we had an open house to show off our new offices. Old and new friends

Soup + Labels = M-m-m Good Educational Tools

Over the years, the Campbell's Soup Company's Labels for Education program has been a blessing for our students and teachers. Through this program, school supplies and teaching aids have been "purchased" with labels from Campbell's Soup and related products collected by our supporters. During the current school year,

Tips for Label Savers

- Please send the entire soup label, not just the Labels for Education logo. (We have had quite a few logos sent in and, unfortunately, we weren't able to use them.)
- Vlasic Pickle jar lids no longer are eligible for the program, so please don't send them.
- Some grocery stores issue checkout coupons and newspaper circulars print Labels for Education coupons that are worth additional points, so we're always looking for those.
- At the beginning of each school year, please check the current Labels for Education list for eligible products (available from Lutheran Special Education Ministries or on your computer at www.labelsforeducation.com).

Lutheran Special Education Ministries will exchange 220,000 labels for classroom merchandise.

Schools, churches, organizations and individuals who have a heart for our ministry collect the labels. Then they are processed at the National Office and redeemed for merchandise to be used in Lutheran Special Education Ministries classrooms across the United States. Each of the ministries' six regions submits a "wish list" from the Campbell's catalog and the items are requested in order of need.

This year the labels will allow the ministry to receive a laminating machine, several cassette player/recorders, several Franklin Spelling Aces, and phonics and computer programs.

Lutheran Special Education Ministries Executive Secretary Kathy Baker-Seagram has the daunting task of processing the thousands of labels the ministry receives each year.

"It truly is a labor of love," she says. "It's great for the ministry, and a wonderful way for people to support us."

Individuals and groups collecting labels are reminded to check the list of eligible products at the beginning of each school year. Campbell's Soup labels are always valid but some of the related products change from year to year. The list of products is available from Lutheran Special Education Ministries and on the Campbell's web site at www.labelsforeducation.com.

Due to the volume of labels received and the increasingly precise requirements for submitting them to Campbell's, processing the labels for redemption continues to be ever more time-consuming. Baker is always on the lookout for willing volunteers to help with the process. Individuals or organizations with time to help should contact her Monday through Thursday at the National Office, 313-368-1220, Ext. 100.



Midwest Region teachers Janice Miller (left) and Jennifer Green sort labels that have been collected.

Around the Ministry

Continued from page 3

Southwest Region By Laura Sauer, Director

One parent recently said how much their child loved the time spent with our resource teacher. The teacher was surprised when told about this because the child is so quiet. Another parent thanked Laura Sauer for always going to the Individualized Education Plan meetings for her child. She said it helps her wade through the data given her and helps make sure that her child is getting the help he needs to succeed. They have been in our program since we

began in this region three years ago.

When God closes a door He opens a window. The students are learning that Jesus is their Lord, and that if you don't learn one way try another way. Everyone can learn. Our four dedicated teachers are teaching this lesson to the 100 students in our programs.

We are thankful for the continued support of the consortium partners, donors and principals. Our partnership with schools is expanding for fall 2003 and we are looking for two teachers to fill these positions.

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