



The Advocate

Winter 2005

Serving Children Who Have Special Learning Needs

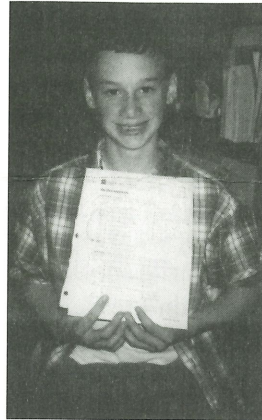
Volume 74, No. 1

Reaching, Serving, Enabling, Succeeding

Reach, Serve, Enable. These three words tell the vision of Lutheran Special Education Ministries. As we look to the future, we strive to reach out to more children each year; to serve them in the classroom and at church; and enable them to receive a Christ-centered education.

The statistics are staggering. One child out of every five in the United States has a special learning need.

Therefore, if you know more than five school-age children, the chances are good that you know someone who needs special help to learn.



A very proud Cameron shows teacher Lori Newton the very first A he received on his social studies test.

The children served by Lutheran Special Education Ministries do have special learning needs, but they

certainly are not statistics. They are children of God – each of them is a unique person, created by God.

But having special learning needs isn't quite the same as other challenges that children might face. A special learning need may not be something that can be seen – like difficulty walking. Difficulty reading or writing and the ability to focus attention in class are special needs, but they are not immediately apparent to others. They are, however, very real to the children who struggle every

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Church Extension Fund of the Michigan District Awards Grant

By

Debbi Torbet

Development Operations Specialist

Lutheran Special Education Ministries is the grateful recipient of a \$10,000 grant from the Church Extension Fund of the Michigan District. The generous grant is earmarked for improvements to the ministry's Web site.

"On behalf of the directors, teachers, parents and the many children Lutheran Special Education Ministries serves each year, I sincerely thank the Church Extension Fund of the Michigan District of the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod for awarding us with this generous gift," said Lutheran Special Education Ministries President and CEO Roger DeMeyere.

By improving the Web site's content and interactive capabilities, Lutheran Special Education Ministries will significantly improve its ability to create a closer and healthier functioning Christian community on the World Wide Web. It also will assist the ministry in achieving its

vision — to reach, serve and enable more children with special learning needs every year.

Specifically, the gift will be used to update the overall appearance of the site. As mentioned in a previous edition of *The Advocate*, the ministry recently adopted a new logo. This new logo will figure prominently in the redesign.

Most importantly, the new design will offer many supportive options for parents, teachers, pastors and school administrators. These options will include links to other Web sites in the field of special education such as Autism Research Institute and the Schwab Learning Center; downloadable brochures (written by the ministry's professional staff) for awareness of special learning needs; and, finally, a means of direct contact either by phone or electronic form for individuals wishing to speak to or meet with one of the ministry's special education professionals about their own

specific needs or to become a partner.

The overall goal is to make changes in the site that will make it a more valuable resource tool, and help to bring about a new awareness and understanding of the ever-increasing number of children who have special learning needs.

In addition to being more interactive, the refurbished Web site will be more user friendly to individuals who have special learning needs. One example of this will be the inclusion of the Kurzweil software program, which speaks the text on the computer screen aloud to the reader.

This grant from the Church Extension Fund of the Michigan District, together with a grant from the Siebert Foundation, will allow Lutheran Special Education Ministries to have the capability to administer its e-mail in house on its own server for the first time.

Plans call for the changes and improvements to the Web site to be implemented during the early months of 2005.

Reaching, Serving, Enabling Children Such as These

Instead of spending time making new year's resolutions (which I never keep), I decided to use my time more wisely to write this article.



I paused to reflect on what keeps me at Lutheran Special Education Ministries after all of these "new

years." Although I have been connected with this ministry in some way for my entire life, this is my 18th year as its president and CEO. My, how time flies. It's hard to believe I've been here this long.

A friend recently asked me what keeps me motivated. I'm glad he asked. There's no question that I have a passion for our vision – to Reach, Serve and Enable – but it is not vision

alone that motivates me.

It is the words of Jesus that animate my heart: "Whoever welcomes a child like this in my name welcomes me." I've read this passage a hundred times. I picture Jesus walking over to the crowd to embrace a child. Then I picture the child. Who was that child? An athlete? A scholar? Normal? Perfect? Or did Jesus embrace another "least of these" to more clearly make His point? A child who was different – handicapped in some way?

Then I thought, perhaps it was a child like Yolanda, a girl with special learning needs who couldn't read when I first met her. By the time she left our program, she had the skill and confidence to read a story to our board of trustees. There wasn't a dry eye in

the group.

Or was it a child like Bobby, who was diagnosed with a malignant brain tumor and, after several operations, continued to need help to stay in school? Perhaps it was Michael who was diagnosed with dyslexia.

Think about it. Did Jesus embrace a child such as these? Of course He did.

The vision of Lutheran Special Education Ministries is to Reach out to children with special learning needs across the United States; to Serve these children with Christian caring and concern and love; and to Enable these children to receive a Christ-centered education. It's a team effort between our students, their parents, the teachers and you, our supporters. Your prayers and your gifts make our ministry possible.

Succeeding continued

day to overcome them. And they are very real to their parents who want the best for their children.

Whether it is in a Christian elementary or high school or at church in a Sunday school class, confirmation instruction or vacation Bible school, children who have special learning needs are being helped by Lutheran Special Education Ministries on a daily basis.

In the life of a child who has a special learning need, getting an A on an assignment or a test can be a major achievement. Lutheran Special Education Ministries teacher Lori Newton recounted the story of Cameron, a sixth-grade student.

"He looked like a deer caught in the headlights," she recalled. She had just told him and a classmate that it was time to learn to write essays.

"The 12 empty lines under the

social studies essay questions made their palms sweat and their hearts race. They froze at the mere thought of writing an essay in English class. Not knowing how to put their thoughts and opinions into words on paper was seriously affecting their grades. Learning to write a coherent paragraph was a goal we needed to begin working on as soon as possible," she said.

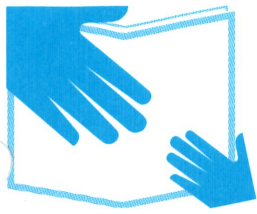
The process began, with Newton reviewing the basic elements of a good paragraph. The boys were hesitant. "They had been unable to do this 'writing thing' for so long that unraveling the mystery of it caused some trepidation," she added. "They worked like crazy and helped each other."

And then it happened. Cameron got his first A on a social studies test. "It was cause for real celebration,"

Newton said. "He wasn't leaving the essay questions blank anymore. He knew how to attack and methodically conquer them. You can't imagine the joy in his eyes when he ran down the hall and into my classroom to show me the test. He was beside himself, and his regular classroom teacher was thrilled, too."

That first A was a true accomplishment for Cameron. For many students, it may be one of many. But for a child who has special learning needs, it is a major success.

With teachers like Newton reaching out to serve students like Cameron, Lutheran Special Education Ministries is enabling God's special children to prepare themselves for school and the life that awaits them beyond their formal educations.



Special News

Winter 2005

From the Great Lakes Region

Volume I, No. 1

If My People Pray . . . 2 Chronicles 7:14

The above verse from Chronicles is the theme for the 2004-05 school year in the Great Lakes Region. When we ask God to show us the power in prayer, He gives us opportunities to see that power. Christians are always looking to witness how God will answer prayers. In the Great Lakes Region, many people have provided answers to prayers.

The Great Lakes Region began this school year with 32 teachers serving 325 students at 27 partnership schools in Michigan and Indiana. The fact that we have reached out to and are able to serve so many children truly is an answer to the

prayers of parents, teachers and principals.

The staff continues to reach out in prayer, asking that other schools proclaim an interest in serving children with special needs. Great Lakes Region Director Kathleen Hodges has been attending principal meetings in Indiana and Michigan in an effort to spread the word about Lutheran Special Education Ministries. Prayers continue that these meetings may lead schools to offer our program to children and, in doing so, will bring the word of God to more students who have special learning needs.

As the school year continues, so will

the prayers. We would ask that you, our friends, join us in praying for our students and teachers. As the prayers continue, God will continue to answer them.

Prayers in the Classroom

**By Amy Meyer
Teacher, Great Lakes Region**

It was an extremely cold February morning in Indiana, and after school had been closed for several days due to the weather, my first graders were refreshed and full of winter stories. We had been working on improving their reading fluency when Sarah and David asked if we could pray before continuing.

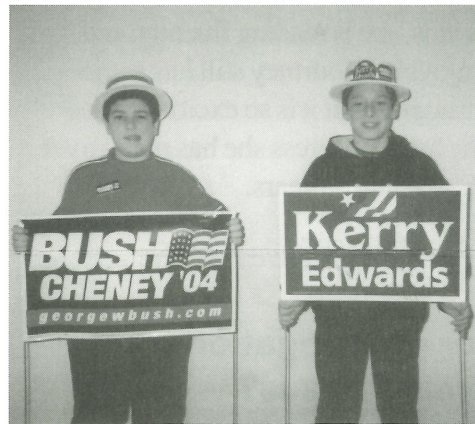


Philippians 4:6 tells us, "Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God."

As the snow blew outside of my classroom windows that day, I was delighted. These seven-year-old children were applying what they had been learning about God. They also showed that they were trusting in Him to help them with their reading, a subject that has been challenging for them. That day, we asked the Lord for help. The students took the next step and used the eyes, ears, voices and fingers that God gave them, and they practiced their reading skills.

Together we thanked the Lord and gave each other "high fives."

A Lesson in the Political Process



Marcus Rodriguez and John Drinkert took part in the resource room election project by placing signs for the presidential candidates around the school.

Last November, Lutheran Special Education Ministries teacher Jan Schneider and her students at St. Matthew Lutheran School in Westland, Mich., decided to bring the presidential election into the classroom. The resource room students sponsored a schoolwide presidential election.

For the pre-election campaign, the students prepared posters for John Kerry and George Bush. On Election Day, each class was invited to the resource room so that each student could cast a secret ballot. After counting the ballots, the resource room students announced the winner, President Bush.

"The experience gave the students an opportunity to see what it is like to have the privilege to vote in this wonderful country," said Schneider.



Dylan Shephard and Jimi Perez cast their votes in the resource room's Election Day project.

Special News from the Great Lakes Region

God Answers Our Prayers

The Great Lakes Region's many supporters are providing the answers to prayers every day. Below are some of the ways our supporters help our ministry.

School Supply Showers continue to be a blessing to the teachers and students. Every pencil, book and sheet of paper that is donated is appreciated.

Our Ink Jet Cartridge recycling project brings in much-needed funds,

as well as protecting the environment of God's beautiful earth.

Labels from Campbell's Soup and related products allow us to purchase many items each year that are used by our students and teachers in classrooms.

Donations are one major source of support. The gifts we receive help us meet the cost of providing high quality services for schools and churches.

These are just a few ways that

people have given to Lutheran Special Education Ministries Great Lakes Region. You can support our ministry too, in any of the ways above. For more information about these and other possibilities, please contact our regional office. Your assistance will allow us to meet the needs of more students each and every day.

Please keep in mind that the most important way you can support us is through your prayers.

Success: A Letter and a Word at a Time

**By Debbie Koehlinger
Teacher, Great Lakes Region**

Kourtney is a sweet, hard-working little girl who is in the second grade. I have worked with Kourtney since she was in kindergarten. She has come a long way.

In kindergarten, she knew only six letters consistently, and knew only

numbers one through 10. While in first grade, she had learned almost all of her letters and a few rhyming words. At that point, we began a reading program. Eventually she could read some sight words and some consonant – vowel – consonant words. Still, Kourtney was having a really hard time reading.

We kept working hard during first grade. With some help over the summer, she has blossomed with her reading. She now knows 100 sight words, she is reading fluently, and enjoys it. Kourtney still has some struggles, but it is so exciting to see the huge progress she has made over the past three years.

The Great Lakes Region of Lutheran Special Education Ministries serves Michigan, Indiana and Ohio. For more information about programs and services, please contact:

Great Lakes Region Director
Kathleen S. Hodges
Lutheran Special Education Ministries
6861 East Nevada St.
Detroit, MI 48234
313-368-1220, Ext. 114
khodges@luthsped.org

Are there children in your congregation who have special learning needs?

Our staff can help your staff.

The Lutheran Special Education Ministries staff of Christian special education professionals can help you minister to these children in Sunday school, confirmation classes and vacation Bible school.

For information, please contact the Great Lakes Regional Office at 313-368-1220, Ext. 114.



Special News

Meet Our Staff



The 2004-05 school year started in the Midwest Region with programs at 15 partnership schools. This marks the 21st year for Lutheran Special Education Ministries programs in the region.

Through God's grace, the staff in the Midwest Region is working hard to enable His precious children with special learning needs to receive a Christ-centered education. This year's Lutheran Special Education Ministries Midwest Region staff, pictured above, include: (from left) Sue Gardner, Midwest Region secretary, Susan Lewis, Midwest Region Director, Joselito Seldera, teacher at Jehovah, Chicago and St. John, Montrose; Martha Maggiore, teacher at Bethesda, Chicago, and St. Paul, Skokie; Lynn Luetgert (back row) teacher at Ashburn, Chicago, Luther East High School, Lansing, and Trinity, Lansing; Sue Berka, teacher at

Grace, Chicago, and Immanuel, Dundee; Marilyn Heppner, Midwest Region secretary; Arlene Lapsansky (back row) teacher at Trinity, Tinley Park, and Zion, Matteson; and Susan Coffey, teacher at St. Paul, Munster, Ind.; (top inset) Rosalyn Bone, teacher at Trinity, Springfield; and Carolyn Mahal (bottom inset), teacher at Immanuel, Elmhurst, and St. John, Forest Park.

Shop to Benefit Children

Lutheran Special Education Ministries' Midwest Region has arranged for designated shopping days at all Dominick's and Jewel-Osco stores during the end of February and throughout the month of March.

On the assigned shopping days, Lutheran Special Education Ministries will receive credit for five percent of the total net purchases of shoppers turning in identification slips.

Anyone interested in helping our ministry by shopping at Dominick's or Jewel-Osco on the selected dates should contact Susan Lewis at 708-209-3344 or at slewis@luthsped.org to obtain an identification slip. The five percent of your total purchases will be donated to our ministry and will be used to enable children with special learning needs to learn about Jesus.

Become an Active Friend: Volunteer

Lutheran Special Education Ministries has been blessed by the prayers and generous financial support of friends like you over the years. From time-to-time, we can use "hands on" support in the form of volunteer time. Calls from principals have become more frequent recently, asking whether we are aware of individuals who could serve as an aide to one of their students in the classroom.

In addition, the Midwest Region office sometimes has projects, such as stuffing envelopes and planning or helping out at a special fundraising event. Your talent and your love of helping children are needed. Call our office today -- 708-209-3344 -- to volunteer your time and your talent.

Lutheran Special Education Ministries

Special News from the Midwest Region

Reach, Serve, Enable Conference

Lutheran Special Education Ministries Midwest Region held its second annual Reach, Serve, Enable Conference for Christian school special education teachers in northern Illinois. The day-long event was held on the campus of Concordia University, River Forest, Ill., just before the beginning of the new school year.

A highlight of the conference was the participation of Pastor Don Kretzschmar of Voice of Care Ministries, which serves individuals who have developmental disabilities.

Four one-hour sessions were offered, with respected specialists speaking on various topics, including: Speech, Language and Communication Therapy in the Classroom with



Pastor Don Kretzschmar of Voice of Care Ministries leads devotions at the Midwest Region's second annual Reach, Serve, Enable Conference for Christian school special education teachers.

Suzanne Carr of the Belle Center in Chicago; Understanding Autistic Spectrum Disorder presented by Dr. Julia Rahn of Studio for Change,

Chicago; a Roundtable Discussion from the Parents' Perspective with Special Needs Children with Arlene Lapsansky, a Lutheran Special Education Ministries instructional consultant; and Reducing Stress in the Classroom by Brent Diers of Lutheran Child & Family Services of Illinois.

For teachers attending the annual conference, credit for recertification is made possible through Concordia University. Plans are under way for next year's event. Teachers serving children with special learning needs in a Christian school who would like to attend should contact the Lutheran Special Education Ministries Midwest Region Office.

Early Childhood Reading Skills

Midwest Region Director Susan Lewis addressed a group of early childhood educators during Concordia University's 28th annual Early Childhood Conference.

All of the educators were eager to learn the key indicators of children who experience difficulties reading in school and how they could, as teachers, promote children to become successful readers through early intervention.

They learned that the characteristics for children at risk of experiencing difficulty with reading include: delay in speaking; difficulties in pronunciation ("baby talk"); leaving off beginning

sounds ("pisghetti" for "spaghetti"); inverting sounds ("aminal" for "animal"); talking around a word or vague words (older children, using "stuff" or "thing"); difficulty learning names and sounds of letters; and family history of a reading problem.

Kindergarten through second grade teachers learned how they could download the Illinois Snapshot of Early Literacy from the Illinois State Board of Education's Web site at www.isbe.state.il.us/.

Lewis has been asked to speak on the subject again at a workshop at Concordia University, River Forest, on March 12, 2005. For more

information, contact Roberta Smith at the university, 708-209-3622.

The Midwest Region of
Lutheran Special Education Ministries
serves Lutheran and other Christian schools
and churches in Illinois and Iowa.
For more information about our services,
please contact:
Midwest Region Director Susan Lewis
Lutheran Special Education Ministries
Concordia University
7400 Augusta, Box 1N
River Forest, IL 60305
708-209-3344
slewis@luthsped.org



Special News

A New Year of Reaching, Serving, Enabling



The 2004-05 school year began with a meeting of the Northcentral Region staff. Pictured, from left, are: Diane Bisping, Linda Kalk, Donna Stole, Julia Buuck, Chris Boerner, Kathy Meier, Michelle Melde and Northcentral Regional Director Dennis Senne.

A New Year

Through God's grace, the 2004-05 school year began in the Northcentral Region with 152 students receiving services in eight partnership schools.

Our seven professional, Christian teachers are providing services at: Concordia Academy, Roseville, Minn.; Zion, Mayer, Minn.; Christ Community, Watertown, Minn.; Trinity First, Minneapolis, Minn.; St. John, Maple Grove, Minn.; Lutheran High School, Mayer, Minn.; Zion, Cologne, Minn.; and Faribault Lutheran, Faribault, Minn.

Teachers Learn, Too

Each year, the ministry's teachers are required to attend various training sessions and workshop presentations designed to provide them with information that can be put to practical use in the classroom. At the beginning of the school year, the teachers attended several in-service workshops. "Tips for Creating a Peaceful Classroom," "Why is a Non-biased Assessment Important," and "Kansas Strategies" were presented by Sally Baas and Julie Jochum-Gartrell, both professors at Concordia University, St. Paul, Minn.

The ministry's professional staff members have served as recent workshop

presenters for two separate presentations. In cooperation with the South Dakota District and Bethesda Lutheran Homes and Services, the Northcentral Region presented a workshop entitled "Creating a Welcoming Community" and an overview of autism spectrum disorders and Asperger's syndrome. At a meeting of principals from the North Wisconsin District, Lutheran Special Education Ministries staff members presented an overview of our programs and information about different learning styles.

Amazing Volunteers

The Northcentral Region is blessed with many volunteers who care about the children we serve and assist our teachers. Thanks to the efforts of volunteer parents, the Lutheran Special Education Ministries teachers at Faribault, Zion (Cologne), St. John and Trinity First are receiving invaluable assistance. Whether it is listening to a child read or helping a child with math, these volunteers are providing important services.

In addition, a student mentor program has been established at the two partnership high schools in the region – Concordia Academy and Lutheran High School.

Yet another volunteer group that is

integral to our success is the Regional Support Council. The five-member council is comprised of Howard Weiss, Julie Bentley, Wendy Watson, Michael Flynn and Michael Bratlie. This group of Christian leaders continues to be of valuable assistance as we move forward to expand services and programs and seek financial resources.

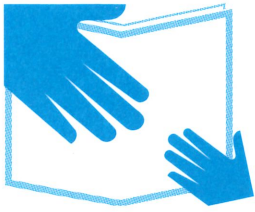
Reaching, Serving, Enabling

With eyes toward the future, the Lutheran Special Education Ministries Northcentral Region Consortium – Concordia University, St. Paul; the Minnesota South District; the Minnesota North District; the South Dakota District; and the North Wisconsin District – continue to support the efforts to expand special education programs.

Currently, three schools are considering starting special education programs in the future.

Reaching out to more schools. Serving more children and parents. Enabling children with special learning needs to receive a Christ-centered education. With the prayers and the gifts offered by our supporters, we are empowered to carry out this vision to Reach, Serve and Enable.

The Northcentral Region of Lutheran Special Education Ministries serves Lutheran and other Christian schools and churches in Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota and Wisconsin.
For more information about our services, please contact:
Northcentral Region Director Dennis Senne
Lutheran Special Education Ministries
Concordia University
275 North Syndicate Street, Room 336
St. Paul, MN 55104
651-603-6235
dsenne@luthsped.org



Special News

Blessings Received in Texas

The Southcentral Region truly is blessed. A team of exceptional education professionals has come together to serve students with special learning needs in Texas. Each member brings a unique set of experiences and expertise from which to draw. Together the staff is a dynamic team that is ready to serve the students, families, teachers and administrators within the region.

The region was established and special education services began in 2002 with the arrival of Regional Director Gayle Grotjan, Ed.D.

In the 2003-04 school year Lutheran Special Education Ministries formed partnerships with four schools to provide services to students with special needs. In the current school year, services have expanded to eight schools, and include diagnostic services, consultation and instruction, as well as speech and language therapy.

“The ministry of Lutheran Special Education Ministries has grown in amazing ways in a very short time,” said Grotjan. “Through God’s grace,

we have touched the lives of many.

Dr. Bill Hinz, director of school ministries for the Texas District, Lutheran Church — Missouri Synod, the administrators and teachers in Lutheran schools, students and their families have

been exceptionally supportive. It is a privilege for Lutheran Special Education Ministries to serve in Texas.”



Grotjan

Meet the Southcentral Region Staff

Arlana Walters serves as teacher/consultant at Trinity Downtown in Houston, Texas. She earned her B.S. in Social Services from the University of Houston, Downtown; an M.S. in behavioral science from the University of Houston, Clear Lake, and teacher certification from Prairie View A & M.



At Trinity, Walters works with students in grades kindergarten through eight. While the majority of her teaching has been focused on reading instruction, she also assists students in developing better organizational and social skills.

Walters says she feels blessed to be

part of both Lutheran Special Education Ministries as well as the Trinity staff, who have given her a great deal of support.

Helen Werner considers herself to be blessed with a wonderful mission for the education of special students. She founded a Christian school for children with special needs in the Dallas area. When the school closed two years ago, Werner joined Lutheran Special Education Ministries as a teacher/consultant at Faith in Plano, Texas. In this classical setting, one of the unique services she offers is vocabulary skills in Latin.

“I am impressed with the educational program offered to the students here at Faith, and am thankful to be part of changing the

lives of children,” Werner said.

Tanya Schmelzle serves children with special needs in two Lutheran



schools: Faith in Sugar Land and Memorial Lutheran in Houston. She attended St. John’s College in Winfield, Kan., and graduated from

Concordia University, Seward, Neb., with a degree in elementary education. She also earned a master’s degree in reading and reading difficulties.

Prior to joining Lutheran Special Education Ministries for the 2004-05 school year, Schmelzle taught in Lutheran schools for 16 years.

Lutheran Special Education Ministries

Special News *from the Southcentral Region Region*

“The part of this ministry that I enjoy most,” Schmelzle said, “is the reward of watching a special student succeeding in school while learning about their Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, because all students are special to Him.”

Gloria Wendling, a teacher/consultant at Trinity in Spring, Texas, said: “Trinity is a special place for all students, and I am excited to be a part of such a special program. We are making a difference at Trinity.”

After several years as a special education teacher in the public sector, Wendling began serving Trinity as a parent volunteer and substitute teacher. Currently she works with 13 students and their teachers.

Sharon Messmann has been in the teaching profession for 25 years, in both Lutheran and public schools.



This is her first year with Lutheran Special Education Ministries. She serves 10 students with special learning needs

at St. Paul in Fort Worth, Texas.

“It’s early in the school year,” she said, “yet I can already see real benefits and growth among the students we are serving at St. Paul. This school is a nurturing family of caring teachers and volunteers that has helped to guide and nurture my

children’s character and faith relationship with Jesus. I am happy that our school has a Lutheran Special Education Ministries program so that we can serve children with special learning needs. They, too, can receive the Christian education and faith nurturing environment from which my children have so greatly benefited. This is why I am excited to be a part of this team and ministry.”

Bill Honeck, a history and physical education teacher and coach, has been chosen by Lutheran High School North, Houston, Texas, to serve as the first teacher in the Bridge program.

Working with Southcentral Regional Director Dr. Gayle Grotjan, Honeck currently serves ninth and tenth grade students who are struggling with general education requirements. The students meet with him in a special study hall. In addition, Honeck consults with the teaching teams to monitor students’ progress through a proactive approach. He uses his coaching skills to break down learning tasks into component parts,

which enables the students in the Bridge program to be successful.

Pam Rasmussen has experience as a public school special education teacher and joined the staff at a Lutheran school as an early childhood educator. In addition to those responsibilities, she has become a teacher/

consultant for Lutheran Special Education Ministries at Concordia High School in



Tomball, Texas. She consults with general education teachers to enable them to better meet the needs of students who struggle with learning as well as teaching individual and small groups of students.

Through her ministry with Lutheran Special Education Ministries, Pam said, she sees the door opening for families who value Christian education by serving students with special learning needs at Concordia.

The Southcentral Region of Lutheran Special Education Ministries serves Lutheran and other Christian schools and churches in Texas, Oklahoma, Arkansas and Louisiana. For more information about our services, please contact:

Southcentral Region Director Gayle Grotjan, Ed.D.
Lutheran Special Education Ministries
6121 East Lovers Lane
Dallas, TX 75214
214-405-7954
ggrotjan@luthsped.org



Special News

Southwest Region Offers New Service

For the first time, a monthly consultation support service is being provided in the Southwest Region of Lutheran Special Education Ministries. Zion Lutheran in Fallbrook, Calif., and Hope Lutheran in Glendora, Calif., are part of this program.

The service involves a three-hour school

visit each month, during which many services can be provided, including: staff development workshops; parent workshops; recommendations for instructional strategies; modifications and behavior management plans; attend individual education plan meetings;

student observations; review student records; conferences with teachers and parents; and coordination with agencies and schools.

We are excited to be reaching, serving and enabling children with special learning needs through this new service.

Serving Students in Our Fifth Year

The 2004-05 school year began our fifth year of service here in the Southwest Region. What a blessing to have partnerships with 11 Lutheran schools in Los Angeles, Orange and San Diego counties in California, and in Scottsdale, Ariz. We'd like you to meet our hard-working teachers.

Laura Sauer, Southwest Region director, also serves as a consultant at Hope Lutheran in Glendora, Calif., and Zion Lutheran in Fallbrook, Calif. She has earned a master of arts in education and a master of science in special education, both from California



Lutheran University at Thousand Oaks. She also holds a clear multiple subject teaching credential, a mild to moderate disabilities teaching credential and a resource specialist certificate.

Garry Unger is our teacher at St. John's, Orange, Calif. He earned a master of arts in special education from Asuza Pacific University in Asuza, Calif.



Ashley Steele is the Lutheran Special Education Ministries teacher at Shepherd of the Desert, Scottsdale, Ariz. She has completed her coursework for her master's degree from California State University, Fullerton, and is working to complete her master's thesis.



Susan Barstow (right) and **Beverly Bogardus** are the Lutheran Special Education Ministries teachers at Salem Lutheran in Orange, Calif.



Barstow continues to work on her master's degree in reading from California State University at Fullerton. She has completed three quarters of the program.

Bogardus earned a master of science in education - reading from California State University at Fullerton. She also has a clear multiple subject teaching credential and a reading and language arts specialist credential.

Jean Renta teaches at Canoga Park Lutheran in Canoga Park, Calif., and Trinity Lutheran Junior/Senior High in Reseda, Calif. She currently has completed three-quarters of the work on her master's degree from California Lutheran University in Thousand Oaks, Calif., and holds a preliminary California teaching credential in mild to moderate disabilities.



Michelle Finch serves students at Concordia, Cerritos; St. Paul's Lutheran in Garden Grove; Faith Lutheran in Whittier; and Christ Lutheran in Rancho Palos Verdes. She holds a master of arts in special education from Azusa Pacific University and a mild to moderate disabilities teaching credential.



Our Sincere Thanks

The Southwest Region has so many individuals and organizations for which to be thankful. Their assistance allows us to reach, serve and enable children who have special learning needs. At this time we are especially thankful for:

Faith Lutheran School in Vista, Calif., for sending in 2,548 Campbell Soup labels.

Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran in West Hills, Calif., Faith Lutheran in Whittier, Calif., and Hope Lutheran in Glendora, Calif., for their chapel donations.

First Lutheran Church and School in Van Nuys Calif., for housing our regional offices.

The Southwest Region of Lutheran Special Education Ministries serves Lutheran and other Christian schools and churches in California, Arizona, Nevada and Utah. For more information about our services, please contact:

Southwest Region Director Laura Sauer
Lutheran Special Education Ministries
First Lutheran Church
6952 Van Nuys Boulevard
Van Nuys, CA 91405
818-988-7667
lsauer@luthsped.org

Donation on Wheels: A Good and Faithful Servant

It may have been a 1993 Ford Escort, but that 11-year-old car was so much more than tires, doors, a motor and air conditioning. This car with more than 100,000 miles proved to be a good and faithful servant to good and faithful Christians, including the children served by Lutheran Special Education Ministries.

Rev. Matthew Heise owned the car – even before he became a Lutheran pastor.

“Matthew had been teaching at a university in Russia, and left the car with us while he was gone,” explained his father, Walter Heise. “While he was in Russia, Matthew decided to become a pastor. He came home from Russia to attend seminary in St. Louis, and drove the car out there.”

Matthew returned to Russia for his vicarage and left the Escort at the seminary. “There was an African student at the seminary, and he and his family had no transportation. So Matthew loaned the car to them while he was gone. The following year a deaconess studying at the seminary used the car. During the third year the car spent in St. Louis, another seminary student drove it.

Throughout the time the car was in St. Louis and being driven by others studying at the seminary, Matthew continued to pay the insurance premiums. His parents, with the help of a Lutheran Hour employee in St. Louis, made certain that the car maintenance was up-to-date and the license plates were current.

“Four years after Matthew drove the car to St. Louis, he drove it back to our house in Michigan,” Walter explained. “He wanted to leave it here, but by that time it had more than 100,000 miles on it. It just seemed better to get Matthew a newer car rather than keep the Escort parked in my garage.”

Although Matthew spends his time traveling around Russia, teaching and



working with the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod and the Finnish Lutheran Church, he returns home every year and needs transportation when he’s in the United States. The newer car that his parents helped him purchase will provide reliable transportation, but the Escort still had some life left.

So after having been a blessing to at least four church workers, the car was to be sold. But even the sale allowed the car that gave so much to give even more. Matthew signed the car over to his father, and Walter contacted Charity Motors, a company that auctions cars and donates the

proceeds to charities designated by the cars’ owners.

“We have supported Lutheran Special Education Ministries over the years. We wanted the money to go toward helping the children,” Walter added.

When you consider all of the lives that have been and will be touched by all of the Christian servants who used that 1993 Ford Escort and the many children with special learning needs who are served by Lutheran Special Education Ministries, there’s no doubt that the car has been a good and faithful servant.

To Remember and to Honor

Throughout the years, Lutheran Special Education Ministries has been blessed with faithful donors who have honored a beloved person or

organization or given a memorial to remember a loved one who has passed away. These special gifts do so very much to help the precious children we serve.

The development department is in the process of updating the ministry’s printed materials, and among the first to be completed are the Honorarium and Memorial folders.

If you, your church or your organization would like to receive copies of the new folders, please contact the Lutheran Special Education Ministries National Office at 313-368-1220.

“He who believes has everlasting life.”
John 6:47



A Memorial Gift
to
Lutheran
Special Education
Ministries

To
the
Glory
of
God

An Honor Gift
has been given
to
Lutheran
Special Education
Ministries

Are You One of the Seventy Percent?

By
Gene Kuebler
Vice President,
Development



You may be astonished to learn that more than 70 percent of adults who die in America each year, die without an estate plan. This means that the laws of the state and the court system will decide the distribution of your resources - the resources with which God has blessed you and entrusted to you.

Most people will work for more than 40 years to accumulate these assets, and continue to spend the next 10 years working diligently to protect what has been accrued. Yet during these same 50 years, they cannot find two hours to spend deciding how to distribute their earthly possessions.

As Christians, why should we take the time to create a Christian plan?

Because of the people about whom we care. If you are a parent reading this article and have minor children, an estate plan is extremely important. If the Lord were to take both parents today, who would raise your children and where would they be raised?

The number one reason people write their first will is because parents are taking a trip together. Many times, Christian parents make the wrong assumption that their children's baptismal sponsors will raise their children. Don't take the risk;

establish an estate plan so you can direct the courts to appoint guardians of your choice. In addition, as we become older, our children may need to make decisions concerning our well being, and they want to make the right decisions. A proper estate plan can help to direct and address these concerns.

Because of the assets with which God has entrusted us. Everyone accumulates assets during their lifetime. You may own a home and over the years you may have furnished this dwelling with many personal items. Perhaps there is a car or two parked in your driveway. What about your checking account, your IRAs - and life insurance? Maybe you have envisioned giving the family summer cottage to your children. Many of these assets can be transferred during lifetime, and some people have chosen this approach rather than to institute an estate plan. This form of transfer may not be the ideal plan. Many times your family will experience more negatives than positives. Ask this question: "If I add a child's name to my accounts or deeds, have I given them any legal rights?" I can answer these questions for you.

Because we can give back with our charitable gifts. If you are like my family, we support a number of ministries during our lifetime. An estate plan

provides us with the opportunity to make one last gift. Lutheran Special Education Ministries has been blessed through individuals who chose to create an estate plan that provided a gift to our ministry. These gifts are helping Lutheran Special Education Ministries make a difference in the lives of children this very day.

It may take two hours or it may take more time to make these decisions. It helps when you can talk to someone who understands and is trained and willing to discuss your personal options. As a certified development professional, I am qualified to help others take this first step and beyond. Working with me at Lutheran Special Education Ministries is Development Operations Specialist Debbi Torbet. Together, we share 25 years of experience in helping others create a Christian plan. It has been our privilege to assist fellow Christians just like you with estate planning. If you have questions or would like assistance, please fill out the attached coupon and send it to us at: 6861 East Nevada St., Detroit, MI 48234; telephone us at 313-368-1220; or e-mail us at: gkuebler@luthsped.org or dtorbet@luthsped.org.

There is no obligation, and all conversations and communications will be treated with complete confidence. Don't remain one of the 70 percent who couldn't find the time. We hope to hear from you. In the meantime, we wish you the Lord's continued blessings.

Yes, I would like more information about how I can continue my giving beyond my lifetime.

- Please telephone me to discuss my personal situation.
- Please send me Memorial Cards & envelopes. Quantity _____
- Please send me Honorarium Cards & envelopes. Quantity _____
- I have already included Lutheran Special Education Ministries in my estate plan.

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Telephone _____

E-mail _____

Return this form to:

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