

# LSEM

Lutheran Special Education Ministries

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

## THE ADVOCATE NEWSLETTER



*Chris (Pistons shirt) with his team of peers!*

Students diagnosed with Asperger's Syndrome face a number of challenges in life and in a classroom. Such is the case for Chris, a 7<sup>th</sup> grader, who is an LSEM student. Year by year, Chris's parents and teachers have worked together cooperatively, to figure out what was going on with Chris, dealing with issues as they came up, working to find solutions as a team, helping Chris to be successful.

As is common with many Asperger's students, social situations became increasingly difficult for Chris as he entered middle school grades. He has difficulty reading nonverbal gestures and communication, understanding facial expressions, and understanding the rules of conversation. As a result, times at school which were less structured and allowed for social interaction with his classmates such as lunch time, recess, and gym were be-

coming painful for Chris. He longed to be part of his classmates social lives but did not know how to be part of their conversations without committing one faux pas after another. His classmates, in turn, did not know how to respond to his inappropriate comments and actions.

At the recommendation of the social worker who is part of our team, we implemented a plan to address these concerns. We began by educating all the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students about what Asperger's is and what it "looks like" in a real person. We asked for their help in putting together a team of peers who would assist this student in social situations throughout the school day. Not surprisingly, they were amazingly compassionate and willing to help.

Nine of Chris's peers volunteered to be on his team. They have met as a group

approximately once per month to discuss how they can help. Various adults including the school psychologist, social worker, principal, and classroom teacher have all been included in the meetings as well. Meeting topics have included brainstorming ways to include Chris in lunchtime conversation (*previously he sat by himself at lunch every day*), how to provide support during unstructured times of the day, how the team can help Chris feel included during partner activities, how to handle bullying, how to respond to inappropriate comments or actions by Chris, and other issues that the students feel are relevant. It is truly a team effort.

What marvelous results we have had! Chris will tell you he is having the best year of his school career! He feels loved and supported by his peers for the first time in a long time. He knows who is on his "team" and has seen them in action on his behalf all through the year. Secondly, Chris's peers are benefiting. They have practiced problem solving skills and are learning about how to provide support for an "atypical" child of God. What skills they are gaining!

Of course, the school year is not over and Chris's elementary school career is not over, either. Certainly we will have issues come up, situations to deal with. However, I am encouraged as I witness with my own eyes Chris's team of peers working with him on his behalf. They are truly an inspiration!

*Lori Newton, LSEM Teacher  
St. Michael's Lutheran School, Richville, MI*

# REACH...

## A Legacy of Love



*"At LSEM we've learned a lot over the years, 136 of them."*



*"Let the little children come to Me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these."*

*"Downsizing seems to be the most popular word of the year. I hear it on the news. I read it in the paper. It's used in business, government and education. I've even heard it in the congregations. Times are tough, organizations are struggling, and they downsize. They cut staff, and as a result, reduce services. LSEM is faced with the same issues, the same challenges."*

I wrote these words in 1992 for our Advocate as an introduction to an article on the financial challenges confronting LSEM and our plans to address them. Déjà vu. Seventeen years later I could use the same words and most of the article. The short version? LSEM was challenged. LSEM changed. LSEM continued to be blessed.

Fast forward to today. There's only one point I would add in 2009. How awesome are God's blessings! His infinite blessings take many forms but one this year was absolutely incredible. The Holy Spirit moved the heart of one of our friends in Texas to remember LSEM in her estate plans years ago. She wanted to leave a final gift for children with special learning needs in the schools and congregations served by LSEM. We received this **legacy of love** in March and it put LSEM in the black for 2008-2009 during one of the worst economic years ever. It was a gift of Exxon Mobil stock that put us over the top.

Thirty years ago who could have imagined that stock would be worth a half million dollars today? Who could have known the magnitude of our needs? And who could have chosen such a perfect time to bless us with this provision? I'm happy to say I know the answer to these questions. You do, too. At LSEM we've learned a lot over the years, 136 of them. **To God Alone Be The Glory! Amen**

*Roger DeMeyere  
President & CEO*

## God's Perfect Timing

Perfect timing is a wonderful thing. I'm not talking about the perfect timing that a Rolex watch keeps, or the perfect timing that is required by an airline pilot to lower the landing gear at just the right time. I'm talking about **perfect** timing. **God's perfect timing**. It never ceases to amaze me how God's timing is so perfect.

An example of God's perfect timing came, dare I say, perfectly, during an executive staff meeting this past January. LSEM had received software at a fraction of the cost from an organization that subsidizes various non-profit organizations. Later, after we started to use the software, we received a questionnaire from the company in which we had to certify that the software would not be used for **"religious"** purposes. We went back and forth on the wording,

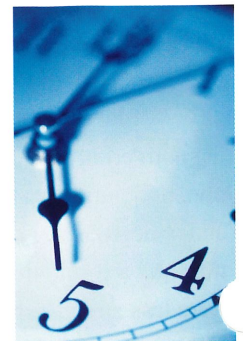
trying to craft the perfect response so we could continue to receive more software at a huge discount. But no matter what words we used it still felt like we were lying and denying (*a' la Peter*) — the truth about our mission. Just so we could save money.

Finally, we agreed to stop playing word games and tell the truth and boldly proclaim that LSEM exists... *"to enable children with special learning needs to receive a Christian education."* What happened next was truly amazing!

At that very moment a staff member informed us that we just received a legacy in the amount of **\$46,983** from one of our friends in Michigan. We all stopped, stunned, looked at each other, and said, *"God's perfect timing and provision again!"* The lesson. God's timing is

perfect and He will provide at just the right time. There's no need to compromise!

And one more thing. Once we completed the questionnaire, we were informed that we did not qualify for the software. We then asked the organization what they wanted us to do with the software we had. They told us to **"keep it."**



*Grace Lorano  
Executive Administrative Assistant*

## Christian Affiliation of Special Educators

**NEW!**

# CASE

Are you a Christian special educator or consultant serving children with special learning needs? Are you a teacher serving students with special learning needs in a Christian school or a Christian school who desires to address the needs of students who are exceptional? If you answered yes to any of these questions we have an opportunity for you.

Christian Affiliation of Special Educators (CASE) is a community sponsored by LSEM which provides a network of support for its members. For an annual fee of \$50 a CASE Member will receive the following:

- Toll free Consultations with a Special Education Professional
- Professional Development Productions Training
- Lending Library
- Interactive Website for Special Educators
- Quarterly E-News
- Annual Resource & Material Mailing
- LSEM Programs & Services, including screenings, at a reduced rate



CASE Member benefits also provide the opportunity to work and share ideas with other CASE Members locally and throughout the country. A member will increase their personal knowledge base with LSEM in-service material and special education updates as well as obtain support from LSEM's experienced special education professionals and much more!

To find out more about how to become a CASE Member you may contact LSEM Resource Director Susan Lewis toll free at 1-888-488-LSEM ext. 112. She will be happy to answer any questions you have.

Please help us spread the word about this valuable network of support. We hope you will consider taking advantage of this opportunity and take the next step and give us a call. Together we will make a difference in the lives of children with special learning needs.



*We hope to hear from you soon!*

Susan Lewis  
Resource Center Director

## Memory Lane

Lutheran School for the Deaf alumni from the mid to late 1970's decided to pay LSEM a visit at our national office at 6861 E. Nevada on Friday, July 17<sup>th</sup>. But what they really wanted to see was the old buildings that they grew up in when LSEM was a residential school for children who were deaf.

What a wonderful time we had touring the property. Although LSEM doesn't own the property any more we were still able to reacquaint the former students with their dormitories (*now offices*), the chapel, dining room and the gym. Twenty alumni visited. *"It was really special to see the hallway filled with people signing, smiling and laughing, thanking God for this ministry and the impact of God's love on their lives,"* said Roger DeMeyere, LSEM President & CEO. What was supposed to be a half hour tour turned into a three and a half hour trip down memory lane. We were so blessed to have our alumni visit. What a wonderful heritage we have.



### LSEM Resource Center Contact Information

**RC Director:** Susan Lewis

**Toll-Free:** 1-888-488-LSEM

**Extension:** 112

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# ENABLE...



## The Advocate

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## Campbell's Labels For Education

### Keep those labels coming!

By collecting labels from  
Campbell's products and send-  
ing them to us, we can use them  
to "purchase" much needed  
classroom materials.

*Thank you for your gift!*



*Thank you to Rich Turgeon and the  
staff at Golden Hawk Golf Club for  
helping to make our 4th annual golf  
outing a big success!*

## Serving Our Community Better

In our continuing efforts to meet the needs of our partners in ministry we are expanding our website. The new website expansion will promote interactive communication among LSEM leadership, and professional staff members. The new website expansion will also promote a network of support among special educators serving in Christian schools and effective interaction within the Christian community-at-large that work with children that have special learning needs.

Our goal is to continually explore new ideas and the use of technology that will best meet the needs of our partners, while being good stewards of our resources. As we do, our hope is that more and more children with special learning needs will be served.

As we look to the future we know there is great potential for growth. We hope that our website expansion will assist us as we grow and will enhance our programs and services. We ask for your patience as we work toward making our website a tool that will help us to serve you and the children we serve better!

*Thank You!*

*LSEM IT Team*



## A Soggy Start on the Links!

Once again our golf outing was a success even though the weather wasn't perfect, we had a soggy start, and the day ended all too quickly! But all agreed that it was a great day of fun, good food and fellowship and all for a good cause.

The event raised an estimated \$10,000 that will benefit children that have special learning needs. Thank you all for your support, especially during these hard economic times. It is truly a blessing to partner

with you in our mission to enable children with special learning needs to receive a Christian education.

We would also like to thank the following **Thrivent Financial for Lutheran Chapters** for their support of our event through their matching gift program, "Care Abounds in Communities."

- East Macomb
- North Macomb
- West Macomb
- North Oakland
- South East Oakland

- Eastern Wayne
- Western Wayne

*We hope to see everyone  
again next year!*



*Karen Newman dazzled us once  
again with her rendition of our  
National Anthem.*