

Views & Vision

The Newsletter of the Evangelical Lutheran Education Association



Our Accreditation Journey

Volume 10, Issue 3

Spring 2009

Beth Coburn, Director Little Lamb Preschool, Valparaiso, Indiana

Little Lamb Preschool's journey to become accredited by the ELEA started during the summer of 2006 with our request for Accreditation materials. Shortly after, with our pastor's support, our school's Accreditation Steering Committee was formed, and the school staff and school board committed themselves to the process. LLP had our site visit on October 25th - 28th, 2008 and was recommended for full accreditation. We are very thankful for the many dedicated people who helped us on this journey, and feel very blessed to have reached the goal of accreditation. The process necessitated the dedicated involvement of many people, long hours, and a good copy machine. The entire accreditation process brought many blessings to our center.



Story time with Mrs. Carmichael

The ELEA Accreditation brochure describes the accreditation instrument as "an evaluation of both the developmentally appropriateness of the program for children and the spiritual life of the center". The process opened the eyes of all stakeholders of our program in both of these areas. It helped us realize who we were, what we are here for, and where we want to go in our ministry. ELEA Accreditation involved a careful evaluation of our early childhood program's Christian Mission, Educational Philosophy, Staff, Curriculum, Physical Environment, and Governance.



Chapel Time at Little Lamb Preschool with Vicar Matthew

Our staff was asked what benefit the accreditation process brought our school. The comments included, "Accreditation reaffirmed that we have something special here and that we are doing a good job." "It

made us reexamine our goals and guidelines". "We were validated by the accreditation team that we were well recognized as a quality preschool by the community." "It validated to parents that they had made a good choice to come here". "It will be reassuring to families that we meet high standards". "It was beneficial to each stakeholder to assess what we are doing in this ministry, including board members, congregational members, preschool staff, and parents". "The process reaffirmed our purpose."

There are many additional benefits of the accreditation process as well. It strengthened the bond between the congregation and school. The Preschool Board and congregational members are much more aware of the importance of our ministry. The process gave the teachers the unique experience of creating their

Our Accreditation Journey . . . Continued from Page 1



Working together is fun!

individual portfolios. Though very time consuming, they now each have a very impressive collection of their accomplishments, as well as a basis for self-evaluation and director evaluation. As school staff, we know what our purpose is, we know our strengths, we have identified areas we want to improve, and

have steps in place to make those improvements. We will be held accountable for those improvements with the yearly progress reports that must be sent into the ELEA office each June.

The Accreditation Site Visit Team was led by Hugh Kress, ELEA Accreditation Coordinator. The team practically lived at our school for 4 days, and was a pleasure to have here. They visited with congregational members during and after church services, met with parents and children, went in and out of our classrooms, and listened intently to staff

members during interviews. Hugh's thoughtful and professional knowledge of administration, educational standards, Christian ministry, and insight into our program were very much appreciated. The three additional site team members were teachers and administrators from our community. We developed great relationships with the entire team, and truly appreciated their evaluation, advice and encouragement.

As the director, I often look back on the process, and remember the long hours and all the wonderful people who gave so much of themselves through the entire 2 year journey. Little Lamb Preschool feels truly blessed to have had the help of each of those people. Christ Lutheran Church considers it a privilege and serious responsibility to offer a high quality developmentally appropriate preschool program to our community where God's word is shared with all who enter. Quoting part of our mission statement, we say thank you as "together we serve God by shepherding His children" through our ELEA Accredited

Ministry.

Beth Coburn serves as Director of Little Lamb Preschool at Christ Lutheran Church, Valparaiso, Indiana and can be reached at clcvallpollp@verizon.net.



Our families are important at LLP

Who Else is Accredited??

ELEA is excited about all of the elementary schools and early childhood centers who have participated in its Accreditation processes since they were revised in 2005. There are three versions of the process:

1. Early childhood (birth - Kindergarten)
2. K-5 Elementary
3. K-8 Elementary

Schools who have both early childhood and elementary programs may participate in "dual" accreditation and have both entities accredited through one process and one site visit.

Who are the schools and centers who have achieved this distinction?

- ★ Bethel Lutheran School, St. Louis, Missouri
- ★ Christ Lutheran Early Childhood Center, West Covina, California
- ★ Christ Lutheran School, Cape Coral, Florida
- ★ Faith Lutheran Day School, Flower Mound, Texas
- ★ Gethsemane Lutheran School, Maplewood, Minnesota
- ★ Grace Lutheran School, River Forest, Illinois
- ★ Little Lamb Preschool, Valparaiso, Indiana
- ★ Messiah Lutheran School, Fairview Park, Ohio
- ★ Our Savior's Lutheran School & Preschool, San Clemente, California
- ★ Pilgrim Lutheran School, Chicago, Illinois
- ★ St. Paul Lutheran Elementary School, Taylor, Texas
- ★ Westwood Early Childhood Center, St. Louis Park, Minnesota

In addition, there are more schools and centers who are Accreditation and Certified under the previous processes, and MANY more (over 50!) who are currently working on the new process.

For more information on ELEA Accreditation, visit our website at www.eleanational.org or call Hugh Kress, ELEA's Accreditation Coordinator through the National Office at 800-500-7644.

Why wait? This could be the time to start this affirming process!

Nominations Sought For Vetter Award



Donald A. Vetter

Words from the citation for Dr. Vetter's L.L.D. degree provide a benchmark for the award: "He has been the one person most responsible for the quality, promotion, and development of the Christian Day Schools and Preschools within the church." He displays "... a great love for his Lord, and his family; and a personal warmth and spirit easily overlooked in his humble supportiveness of others."

Donald A. Vetter (1919-2002) devoted his adult life to the ministry of Lutheran schools. His own education began in Fort Wayne, IN at his parish's Lutheran elementary school. He later received a bachelor's degree from Capital University (an ELCA institution of higher education in Columbus, Ohio) and eventually an honorary Doctor of Laws degree from California Lutheran University in Thousand Oaks, California. He served as teacher/principal/organist to Trinity Lutheran Church and School, Marysville, Ohio; Zion Lutheran Church and School in Appleton, Wisconsin; and First Lutheran Church and School in Blue Island, Illinois. Dr. Vetter had the foresight to see the need for a national organization to represent the needs and values of Lutheran schools while administrator at First Lutheran in Blue Island. He was instrumental in establishing the American Lutheran Education Association (ALEA), the predecessor of ELEA. He served as the founding Executive Director of the organization. His office was based at Wartburg College where he held a faculty appointment and developed a program of teacher preparation for Lutheran school educators.

Granting recognition to people highly supportive of Lutheran education is a way for the ELEA to honor outstanding accomplishment. Toward this goal, ELEA established The Donald A. Vetter Educational Service Award in 2004. It is designed to identify persons who have provided extraordinary achievements and contributions distinguished by long-standing commitment to the values of ELEA. The award may be granted annually to an individual who has made an outstanding contribution to Lutheran education consistent with Dr. Vetter's own career. The recipient will be deemed a worthy model for those committed to exemplary service in Lutheran education. The award is intended to draw attention to the value of Lutheran schools and early childhood education centers, to identify high standards of excellence, and to inspire others to ministry in such a setting. **[No award will be made to any person currently holding an office on the ELEA National Board or paid position in ELEA.]**



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Hey Mom, Look. There's My Pastor!

Building Bridges Between Preschool and Church

**Pastor David Parks, Our Saviors Lutheran Church
Everett, Washington**
Reprinted from Fall 2002 Issue



Every once and a while I bump into a small child in the aisle at the grocery store, or in the line at the bank, or in the courtyard in front of the elementary school, or in the parking lot at church. Sometimes that child will smile with recognition, pull on the sleeve of a mother's jacket and point at me with the words, "Hey Mom look, there's my pastor!" Their delight and enthusiasm brings joy to my heart.

These chance encounters are not only personally gratifying and happy occasions for warm social contact, they are also the proof that our plan is working. We want kids in our community to recognize us. We want families to become familiar with the pastors and teachers on our staff. When they stop and say, "hello," it is one more sign that our conscious, deliberate plan to build bridges of trust, friendship and invitation with the families we serve in our preschool is actually working.

For fifteen years, [21 years as of this reprint] our congregation has had a successful preschool ministry. It is successful, not because it always makes budget (it doesn't), not because we've never made a family mad (we have), not because we have full enrollment every year (we're usually close), and not because every member of our congregation is supportive of our preschool (they're not). I believe that our preschool ministry is a success because it is the single most effective way for our church to engage the community. We have success in communicating the Gospel of Jesus Christ and an invitation to participate in the congregation's life and worship. It becomes an honest demonstration of supportive care for families with preschool aged children.

We do not have it all figured out. In fact, we are now in a process of rethinking some of our strategies and the ways certain activities take place. Still, after 15 years of risks, new initiatives, bumps in the road and several excellent mistakes, we have stumbled onto some discoveries:

DISCERNING LEADERSHIP

We have been served by a director that is not only very good at her job, but one that also understands the larger purpose of preschool ministry. She knows we need to educate children, but she also knows that the preschool years are a very important time in a family's life. It is a time when they are especially receptive to spiritual nurture and renewal. Her conscious and deliberate interactions with these students and their parents is calculated to build bridges to the promise of God's love in Christ and to the community of God's people; the Church. She keeps this sensibility in mind as she leads staff, plans events and organizes the board.

FAMILY CHAPEL TIME

Several times each month, classes move from their rooms into the Sanctuary for a 15 minute chapel service with the pastors of the congregation. We pray, we sing, we share a theme for the day and the students have a chance to talk to us. We are now talking about expanding these worship gatherings to include Moms and Dads. Instead of a chapel time in the middle of the session, we wonder about moving it to the beginning of the day, so that those bringing kids to school could linger for a few extra minutes and share worship time with their children. We hope parents will make connections

with us and have a positive, faith building experience in church themselves.

[That change was made since the original writing of this article - wow - it works!]

SPECIAL EVENTS

Several times a year, our kids attend events along with their parents. A Spring picnic in the local park, dad's pumpkin carving night, a Christmas pageant and reception, an Easter egg hunt and other events like these are all part of an annual calendar. As pastors, we go out of our way to be present for and help lead these gatherings. They have been times for conversation, new friendships and informal bridge building.

SMALL GROUPS

Our Director has championed the formation of several groups of moms for prayer, Bible study, play time for younger siblings and mutual support. As pastors, we have helped to lead, teach and offer encouragement during these sessions.

It has been wonderful to have time with parents during the Advent season, for instance, to talk about family devotions and making the holidays a chance for deeper reflection and spiritual attention. We've discovered that a lot of adults are hungry for support as the primary faith teachers in their homes.

INVITATIONS

Typically, about half of our

Hey Mom, Look. There's My Pastor! . . . Continued from Page 4

preschool families are people without a church home. We are determined to communicate an authentic, warm and clear invitation to them to imagine our church as a safe haven for faith, care, worship and friendship. They need to hear from us at Christmastime, Easter, the beginning of the Sunday School year and during national emergencies. We mail letters, we send home flyers, we hang posters—but most of all, we attempt personal invitations through teachers, pastors and members of the congregation. What a shame it would be if a family never heard a word of "Welcome!" from us.

A CHANGED MIND

I used to think of our Preschool as an outside group that happened to be using our space for its own program. Like AA, or the Camp Fire Club, or the Retired Teacher's Association, they paid their fee and "borrowed" rooms on our campus for activities in which we had little or no interest. That was dumb!

Since then, I've been converted. I am now unabashedly enthusiastic about our preschool. In fact, I love to brag

about it as our most effective outreach to our community. We have more significant contact with more people in our neighborhood than by any other activity here at church.

That young child in the grocery store changed my mind. One little voice and a bright smile of trust and recognition "flipped a switch" in my head and I was converted.

We are on a mission to build bridges of welcome and invitation to the families we serve. Pastors, congregational leaders, preschool directors, board members, teachers and all those who have passion for the Gospel and an abiding concern for young children and their families may be the best and only hope many kids have to hear about Jesus and life in His name.

Hey Mom, look! It's a community of Christ's people that cares about me!

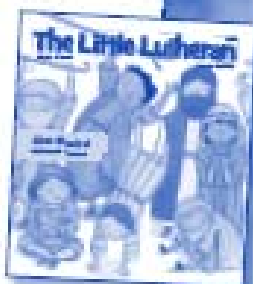
David Parks serves as senior pastor at Our Savior's Lutheran Church in Everett, Washington, and may be reached by e-mail at pastorparks@oslc-everett.org.

Making a significant gift to ministry can increase your bottom line! By making a gift for a charitable gift annuity, for instance to ELEA, you receive an income tax deduction and annuity payment for life. Plus, part of each payment is tax free.

Call your ELCA Foundation Regional Gift Planner or the ELCA Foundation at 800-638-3522, ext. 2970.

Nurturing faith

Early childhood educators like *The Little Lutheran* for school and congregation. Cheryl Stearns, director of children's ministries, Shepherd of the Valley, Apple Valley, Minn., says, "Finally, a wonderful, developmentally appropriate, Lutheran resource for early childhood. . . . A great blend of stories, Psalms, songs and activities. The photography and brightly colored graphics are superb." Order six or more for \$12.95 per subscription. Visit www.thelittlelutheran.org or call 800-328-4648 to order.



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Notes from National ...

Gayle Denny, ELEA Executive Director



☺ As of this writing, the ELEA National Board is preparing for its Spring meeting with, as always, a full agenda. As we prepare to vote on a budget for the July 2009 - June 2010 fiscal year, we once again wish to thank those who have contributed to our Annual Fund and/or the School Extension Fund of ELEA. Donations to our Annual Fund go directly into ELEA's operating budget, and donations to the School Extension Fund go to provide up to three grants per year to schools and centers who are expanding their programs. Thank you to:

- ★ Susan and Steve Ryan
Peoria, Arizona
- ★ Kenneth Kress
Arlington, Virginia
- ★ Trinity Lutheran School
Marysville, Ohio
- ★ Bethlehem Lutheran Church
Marysville, Washington

The Summer edition of Views & Vision will contain a copy of the approved budget and a list of ELEA National Board members. There are vacancies being filled in 3 of our Regions; 2, 3, & 7, and a new Pastoral Advisor will be added as well. Service on the ELEA National Board of Directors is said by most to be a very fulfilling experience. It is filled with challenges as we seek to keep the

Association serving the needs of its members and communicating with them in a variety of ways. It requires commitment, dedication, but also is rewarding - and we have fun! As your Executive Director, I am so grateful for the many men and women who have served on the National Board, as well as the Regional (formerly Network) boards of my almost ten years of service. They are special people.

Many thanks to those who have faithfully served whose terms are ending June 30, 2009:

Region 2	Susan Ryan
Region 3	Brenda Jensen
Region 7	Marlene Lund
	Amy Conley
Pastor	Rev. Dr. Steven Goodwin

When the opportunity arises for board member applicants, both at the Regional and National levels in your area, please consider applying, lending your expertise and serving to make ELEA the best association ever!

☺ Mark your calendar for upcoming events for teachers and administrators:

- ★ Region 5 conference hosted by Rockford Lutheran Academy in Rockford, Illinois on August 15, 2009 with Donna Braband, ELCA Director for Schools as keynote.

- ★ Region 8 Conference hosted by Christ Lutheran Preschool in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. Special guest for this event is Humor Therapist Elaine Lundberg - be prepared to laugh on October 3, 2009.
- ★ Region 4 Conference hosted by Living Lord Lutheran Preschool in Lake St. Louis, Missouri on October 24, 2009 with Eric Hamrick, Director of Youth & Family Ministries as our keynote.
- ★ Region 6 Conference hosted by Central College Preschool in Westerville, Ohio (suburb of Columbus). Keynote and concert by AriSon Records - this will be a very special treat!

Don't miss out on these opportunities for a time of renewal, rejuvenation, new ideas, and networking with colleagues from around your Region (and elsewhere!). Registration materials are mailed 6 - 8 weeks in advance, and also available on our website at www.eleanational.org with links from our home page. Hope to see you soon!

Nominations Sought for Donald A. Vetter Award, *continued from Page 3*

The ELEA National Board is **seeking nominations** for the sixth annual Donald A. Vetter Educational Service Award. One nomination may be made from each ELEA Region. If you have a nominee in mind, please coordinate the submission of the nomination through an ELEA National Board member who represents your Region. If you are unsure of your Region boundaries and board members, please visit www.eleanational.org and click on "Regions" or call the National Office at 800-500-7644. Nominations should be submitted to the ELEA National Office by **June 1, 2009**, and should include the following information. It may be best to make the nominee aware of their nomination so they can provide accurate information:

- Name, contact information and current professional assignment of Nominee
- Name and contact information of Nominators
- Biographical summary of Nominee
- A statement of no more than one page of why the nominee should be awarded the Vetter Award prepared by the Nominator(s)
- Relationship of Nominators to Nominee (i.e. former student, colleague, etc.)
- Letters of support of nomination are encouraged and will weigh heavily in the decision

The award will be presented to the recipient at a future conference or event.

Wheat Ridge Ministries' Center for Urban Education Ministries Receives \$300,000 to Launch Phase One of "The Charlie Project"



Itasca, IL – Wheat Ridge Ministries' Center for Urban Education Ministries is excited to announce it has secured \$300,000 in funding to launch Phase One of "The Charlie Project," a coalition for the future of Lutheran Urban Schools.

Lutheran urban schools are in crisis, their very existence in jeopardy. The goal of The Charlie Project is to ignite a transformation across Lutheran schools – a movement that will result in a cadre of strong, excellent, flourishing schools, built from the dedicated work of Lutheran school leaders over the years. Additionally, the project aims to ensure that future generations of urban children and their families have access to faith-based education that strengthens their lives and prepares them for their futures.

"I am thrilled that so many of our Lutheran foundations and friends have come together to support The Charlie Project," said Marlene Lund, Executive Director, Center for Urban Education Ministries. "I am excited and optimistic as we move forward to create and implement new models of Lutheran education in our cities while maintaining the long heritage of excellence that has been a hallmark of Lutheran schools. These students deserve the opportunity to be part of this marvelous system of schools and we hope that The Charlie Project will facilitate the sustaining and growth of schools in our cities."

Partnering in this important vision of transforming Lutheran schools through The Charlie Project are six organizations who have pledged a combined total of \$300,000 to launch the first phase – The Lutheran Foundation of St. Louis, Missouri (\$50,000), The Siebert Lutheran Foundation, Brookfield, Wisconsin (\$70,000), Thrivent Financial for Lutherans Foundation, Appleton, Wisconsin (\$50,000), The Christopher Family Foundation, Western Springs, Illinois (\$50,000), The Richard D. Van Lunen Charitable Foundation, Columbia, Maryland (\$50,000) and Dr. Mary Wiese Gundelach, Atherton,

California (\$30,000).

Through a four-phase plan over the next six years, The Charlie Project will develop and implement new models that attract the necessary leadership, instill a first-rate educational model and sustain themselves through effective business models. In the first phase, Model Creation and Discernment, the project will identify existing successful school models as well as new and viable models for urban Lutheran education. The Center's core team of experts will then design an appropriate delivery system for this transformational information. From there, the Assessment and Selection phase will engage a broad set of schools and will be followed by the Implementation phase, where a selected cadre transform themselves using new models. The final phase, Replication and Dissemination, leverages these schools as beacons to transform a broader set of urban schools.

Phase One will be implemented over the next four months by the Center's core team, with leadership from Criterion Ventures. The Charlie Project is backed by a consortium convened by the Center for Urban Education Ministries, a specific initiative of Wheat Ridge Ministries. The Center's Advisory Board consists of Christian education experts from around the country. The project is named after Charles Gundelach, a businessman who cared deeply for children in the cities and believed in the role of Lutheran education in strengthening their lives and preparing them for their futures.

Additional information about schools' participation in The Charlie Project will be available in the spring of 2009.

The mission of Wheat Ridge Ministries' Center for Urban Education Ministries is to connect and equip leaders of Lutheran congregations, schools and agencies with resources to help them provide effective educational opportunities for children, youth and families who live in urban environments. To learn more, please visit our website at www.wheatridge.org/cuem.

ELEA's Purpose Statement

*The Evangelical Lutheran Education Association
promotes and supports quality,
Christ-centered schools and
early childhood programs of the ELCA and its full communion partners.*

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Views & Vision

Editor: Gayle Denny

Views & Vision is published four times per year, Fall, Winter, Spring, and Summer by the Evangelical Lutheran Education Association.

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The Great Body Shop

The Children's Health Market is pleased to introduce THE GREAT BODY SHOP to the Evangelical Lutheran Education Association. Recently adopted by Grace Lutheran School in River Forest, IL for grades K-8, this premier health education curriculum has been in schools across the United States since 1987 and meets all the standards for the ELEA accreditation.

THE GREAT BODY SHOP is a pre K-middle school health education program that is research-based and is aligned to the National Health Education Standards. It provides current, quality health education materials that support your school's goals for socially, emotionally and physically healthy children and families. It is easy to teach, fun for kids and has a very strong parent component. While increasing health knowledge, the program helps to build favorable health attitudes and establish health-enhancing behaviors among students, family and faculty.



Using a thematic approach, health topics are integrated into ten monthly units. Lessons are taught just once a week using an attractive magazine format called the Student Issue. Students learn how to make healthy food choices, stay physically active, respect themselves and others, and to take personal responsibility for making health decisions that can help prevent obesity and diabetes, build positive character traits, and take part in violence/bully and drug prevention.

The curriculum is annually reviewed and updated, ensuring that it is always current and relevant. Program materials include a Teacher's Guide, Student Issues and Parent Bulletins, which are used as family resources. Music CDs in preschool and kindergarten reinforce health concepts through music. For more information about THE GREAT BODY SHOP, visit their web site (www.TheGreatBodyShop.net) or give them a call (800-782-7077).